# Inside Practice - a study of community workers in Strathclyde Regional Council Social work Department

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Contents

# Introduction

## Aims of research and summary of content of study

> "Much of the British community work literature which is currently influential came out of the ad hoc projects of the late 1960's and early 1970's.....One unfortunate consequence of this feature of our home grown literature is the inadequate attention paid to the development of long term programmes in established agencies such as social service departments."[1]

Baldock's comment reflects one of the motivating factors behind the research study on which this report is based. Among social work departments in the United Kingdom, Strathclyde is not only the largest but also one which has invested much more extensively than most in community work. Whilst the early history of community work in the region reflects much of the ad hoc character of developments elsewhere, from its inception after local government reorganisation in 1975 Strathclyde had developed a planned policy of investment in community work as part of an anti-deprivation strategy. A study of the community work undertaken within the Social Work Department is therefore a study of long term work in an established agency.

Despite the existence of an explicit policy for community work, it should not be assumed, however, that the character of the work which has developed in the field is fully understood either by the sponsors or practitioners. This is not surprising. Employment of professional workers in any area of activity results in an interaction between the collective and individual dispositions of the workers and the intent of policy. By their very nature policies designed to respond to complex and ill understood problems like multiple deprivation will tend to lack total internal consistency. As a result they are open to different

interpretations which will reflect the motivations of those employed to implement them. The displacement of the intended goals of policy may equally significantly be affected by the attitudes of consumers. This is particularly true in community work where the outcome of any initiative is largely, if not wholly, dependent on the reaction of local people. A worker has to recognise the substantial influence of goals of the community itself if it is to be seen as a central resource in the resolution of its own problems. This constitutes a major and largely uncontrollable variable in the community work process which, alongside employing agency intent and workers dispositions, results in complex interaction, negotiation and 'trade off' which in turn produce the actual character of community work activity.

The dynamic relationship between the sponsors and their policies, the workers themselves, the managers of the service agency in which they are based and the consumers of their activity provides a core focus of this study. The research examines this relationship primarily from the perspective of the community work staff but also seeks an objective view of the work which is actually undertaken.

From its own perspective each party to the relationship may have a different understanding of the nature and functions of community work. Myths and confusions abound, it is vital to know, therefore, what the practitioners actually do and to appreciate their motivation and perceptions of their role. Failure to clarify the nature of the activity is to court the sustaining of unrealistic expectations, which, when they are unfulfilled by the outcomes of practice, produce anger and frustration.

The aims of the research were therefore quite straightforward. They were to move beyond the statements of intent to examine how community workers actually spend their time, what motivates them and how they view the other parties to the community work process: the elected members, their managers and the consumer groups. The central focus of the research was therefore descriptive. Support from the Strathclyde Regional Council Social Work Department for the research was forthcoming on the basis of the following statement from the research proposal:

> "In itself a description of how community workers are spending their time and a statement of the purposes which they perceive this activity to have would be of fundamental importance. If resources are to continue to be expended on community work activity it is essential that accurate descriptive investigation is undertaken to provide a basis for more rational and realistic policy formulation."

In describing the character of practice it was anticipated that variations in patterns of work would reveal information about factors influential in determining the dispositions of different workers to community work activity. Similarly, it was anticipated that the evidence would provide material to consider the relevance of various typologies of community work practice to be found in the practice theory literature of community work.

The descriptive material to be sought focussed on three distinct elements of practice. Firstly, it would identify the characteristics of the community work practitioners. Secondly, it would explore the ways in which they spent their work time and, in so doing, reveal the pattern of their relationships with other people involved in community work. Thirdly, it would explore the value dispositions of workers towards their own practice and their employment context. All of these, it was

hoped, would provide both direct feedback for community work in Strathclyde and, more generally, insights into the character of community work practice in a local authority social work department.

The material in the study is organised in six sections. Part I focusses on a discussion of the context of the research by an examination first of major themes in the history of British community work and second of the particular history of developments in Strathclyde. The discussion provides a basis both for evaluating the nature of the practice described against general community work trends and against the specific policy intentions of Strathclyde Regional Council and its Social Work Department.

Part II discusses the methods of research employed. Basically these consisted of an introductory questionnaire, a time-budget recording procedure and follow up interviews.

Part III concentrates on the descriptive evidence from the questionnaire and the time-budget analysis. It is divided into three chapters. The first examines the characteristics of the 54 workers in the sample in terms of factors such as age, sex, qualifications and work experience. The second focusses on what the workers actually spend their time doing both in terms of the kinds of activities which occupy them and the purposes to which these are directed. The third provides material on the organisational context of workers' practice and explores the time-budget analysis in terms of the patterns of contacts which workers make with other parties to the community work process. It examines the extensiveness and nature of their contacts with other professional workers, elected members and members of the communities in which they work.

Part IV is divided into four chapters and explores the ways in which the workers see their own work and the ways in which they understand the views of the elected members, social work department managers and community groups. The material is derived from the follow up interviews with staff in which they were asked both to reflet on their own aspirations for their work and that of the other parties, as well as to evaluate their own practice from their own viewpoint and that of the other groups. Material here is compared with findings discussed in Part III.

Part V also draws on material from the follow up interviews. It consists of two chapters. The first examines the views of the workers as to the factors which are most influential in conditioning the style and nature of their practice, whilst the second explores what theoretical models of community work practice workers identify with. It goes on to explore their understandings of these models and the consistency with which they are defined, hence providing opportunity for comparisons of operational 'theory' with text book precepts.

The final part of the study draws lessons from the research focussing centrally on the issues arising in community work from its location as a state sponsored activity, particularly within the social work sector. Specific themes which are explored are: community work and the state; community work and social work; the growth of community social work; community workers and other professions; community workers and politicians; community workers and community organisations; knowledge, skills and training; professionalism and; community work and trends in government.

Reference

1. Baldock, P. 'Community Work and the Social Services Departments' in Craig, G., Derricourt, & Loney, M. 'Community work and the state' Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1982.

# PART I

## The Research in Context

# Chapter 1

## Community Work in the United Kingdom

The emergence of community work as a significant activity in Strathclyde Region is not isolated. Indeed its growth from the mid seventies was subsequent to the most significant period of development in the U.K. generally, in the late 1960's and early 1970's. The influence of these particular developments and their earlier precursors is highly relevant to an appreciation of the character of practice in Strathclyde. Seeing local activity in the broader context may also enable readers to more generally apply lessons to other settings.

The 1968 Gulbenkian Committee' report on "Community Work and Social Change", was particularly significant in identifying community workers as a clearly recognisable occupational group in the United Kingdom. The Gulbenkian committee identified three main strands of community work. These were: neighbourhood community development in projects like the Association of London Housing Estates; inter-agency work promoting new projects particularly identified in the role of councils of social service and; research and development for the purposes of social planning, particularly to be found in the role of social development officers in New Towns.

### Early History

The historical influences leading to these various strands are worth brief explanation in that they generally reflect a more conservative tradition than is often assumed to be central to community work. This is not to deny the influence of radical grass roots expressions of

community action but to recognise that the emergence of community workers as an occupational group is more reasonably traced to contexts in which external agents of community change take on the stimulation of community responses. In this light commentators[2] exploring the origins of community work have often pointed to the Settlements Movement of the late 19th century as a distinctly different form of social welfare intervention which begins to encompass the principles now associated with community work. The establishment by Canon Barnett of Toynbee Hall in London's East End in 1883 represents the first of a number of Settlement developments which took social welfare beyond simply poor relief or personal support to individuals in difficulty into the territory of providing resources to support the growth of indigenous skills for mutual aid in the most disadvantaged areas. Ones which had barely been reached by trade union or more formal cooperative and mutual aid developments. The Settlements represented the recognition as Hall[3] put it:

> "that a society which truly seeks the welfare of its members is not only concerned that they shall live but that they shall have opportunities for a more abundant life."

Baldock[4] suggests that Barnett's view of:

> "degradation of the poor, as a consequence rather than the cause of their poverty was an ideological breakthrough".

Given that the Settlement Movement was promoted from the universities as an expression of concern about the poorest communities at a time when university education was generally inaccessable to the working class it also represents in some ways a paternalist and

culturally imperialist stance in relation to welfare intervention. However, the intervention characteristics of the tradition are still discernable in modern day community work.

The settlement tradition continued to be highly influential in the growth in the inter-war period of the community associations movement. As urban redevelopment began to lead to the establishment of new public sector housing estates there was concern about the dislocating effects of the transition to the new environment on social and recreational life. The focus of the activities of these associations on social, recreational and educational activity was seen as creating a sense of belonging to a new location through shared effort and interest. This transformation of a geographical expression into a local community has a direct parallel with the later processes of social development in new towns. It reflects a conservative social ecological tradition in community work.[5] In that the community associations movement was directly promoted by the National Council of Social Services established in 1919 through its New Estates Committee established in 1929, this also reflects a connection to the inter-organisational tradition in community work identified by the Gulbenkian Committee.

The inter-war period

The Community Associations were also supported directly by the intervention of the state in providing resources to community work activity through the powers given to Local Authorities through the 1936 Housing Act and 1937 Physical Training & Recreation Act to provide for the building of community centres. These powers were later to be reinforced by the duties imposed on local authorities through the 1944

Education Act and its Scottish counterpart in 1945. These acts required local authorities to:

> "secure that facilities for primary, secondary and further education provided for their area include adequate facilities for recreation and social and physical training"

and with regard to discharging their duties in this area to:

> "have regard to the expediency of cooperating with any voluntary societies or bodies whose objects include the provision of facilities or the organisation of activities of a similar character."

It was the 1944 Education and 1945 Education (Scotland) Acts which led on to the emergence of the Youth & Community Service (and in Scotland post the Alexander Report[6] of 1975 the Community Education Service). Whilst the research to which this study relates does not examine education authority provision the significance of the emergence of these services should be noted. It is a subject of controversy in community work as to whether these services should be regarded as part of community work (see for example the N.I.S.W. Survey of Community Workers in the U.K. 1984[7] which excludes Youth & Community Workers in England & Wales but includes Community Education Workers in Scotland). However, the continued traditions of neighbourhood based promotion of social recreational and mutual aid activity, particularly through the provision of community centres, should be recognised. The connection is well illustrated in the following quotation from a Ministry of Education booklet of 1944[8] entitled 'Community Centres' which defined their purpose as being for:

> "neighbours to come together on an equal footing to enjoy social recreative and educational activities either as members of groups following particular hobbies or on the basis of their common needs or interest as human beings living in the same locality."

From the education sector, alongside the community centre based provision, another tradition should also be recognised in the role of adult education focussed on the promotion of social and community action. Though by no means as extensively developed, it was to become a significant focus of attention growing out of the late 19th century traditions of the University Extension Movement and the activities of the Workers Education Association founded in 1903.

The post war period

Turning to the post war period there were few major developments until the mid sixties in the U.K. but the growing application of community development techniques in the British colonial territories prior to the establishment of independent statehood deserves comment in that this context was a source not only of workers who later moved into British community work, but was also of influence in terms of the theoretical basis of practice. Writers such as T.R. Batten were to draw on this experience and become highly influential in the promotion of the non-directive school of community work thinking[9] which has been very significant in British community work.

The purposes of colonial community development strategies are a subject of debate and controversy. Were they a genuine attempt to prepare the way for independence or a mechanism for social control to stem the tide of political change? Probably both were involved in the sense that community development could be used as a means to influence the processes and direction of the changes which were occurring. At the

more libertarian end of the spectrum were the non-directive principles ennunciated by Batten (1967) who argued that the community worker:

> "does not attempt to decide for people or to lead, guide or persuade them to accept any of his own conclusions about what is good for them. He tries to get them to decide for themselves what their needs are: what if anything they are willing to do to meet them, and how they can best organise, plan and act to carry their project through."

A more conservative theoretical framework was, however, also prevalent emphasising the idea of community integration. In this formulation the function of community work is not designed to liberate the potential for independent development of problem identification and response but to establish consensus and diminish differences. In the hands of colonial officers, or today, in the hands of employees of the state, such a theory represents a deliberate and directive process which seeks to subject local communities to the perceived needs of the wider society of which they are a part. It is a mechanism for the management of deviancy and dissent. The theory is well illustrated in the writing of Murray Ross[10] who says:

> "Community integration is a process in which the exercise of collaborative attitudes and practices leads to greater: identification with the community; interest and participation in affairs of the community and sharing of common values and means of expressing these values. This implies a process of work in the community that facilitates the growth of awareness of and loyalty to the larger community of which the individual is part; development of a sense of responsibility for the condition and status of the community, emergence of attitudes which permit cooperation with people who are 'different' and the growth of common values, symbols and rituals in the community as a whole."

The theoretical stances developed in part at least in the colonial context were to become influential in Britain. In the work of Illys

Booker in Nottingdale'[11] and the activities of the Association of London Housing Estates'[12] there were, by the early 1960's, well established community work projects based largely around the principles of non-directiveness, whilst the community association movement reflected largely integrationalist models. But it was from approximately 1967 that major developments began to occur. The Gulbenkian Study Group referred to earlier which reported in 1968 was significant in promoting these developments, though its existence was itself a reflection of debates already going on in other quarters. The 'rediscovery of poverty', the emergence of the American 'War on Poverty' with its emphasis on 'the maximum feasible participation of the poor'[13] were already influential. The Gulbenkian report, however, drew together a wide range of people from education, social work and other traditions and began to provide a focus for the examination of the nature of community work. Its report tended to reflect consensual values, placing community work in the context of pluralist social democracy. The report defined community work as being:[14]

> "essentially concerned with affecting the course of social change through the two processes of analysing social situations and forming relationships with different groups to bring about some desirable change. It has three main aims: the first is the democratic process of involving people in thinking, deciding, planning and playing an active part in the development and operation of services that affect their daily lives; the second relates to the value for personal fulfilment of belonging in a community; the third is concerned with the need in community planning to think of actual people in relation to other people and the satisfaction of their needs as persons, rather than to focus attention upon a series of separate needs and problems."

Later it states:

> "In short, community work is a means of giving life to local democracy."

Though giving recognition to community work as a method for tackling a variety of problems it did associate it directly with anti-poverty problems and the growing crises of the inner cities. Community work was placed in a framework of positive discrimination. Though there was by no means a concensus, in that there were arguments for community work not to be seen as associated with a particular profession but an approach for many, in relation to the two main host settings, the report pushed community work towards a social work rather than an educational context. However, as Thomas[15] has commented:

> "whilst the Gulbenkian report put forward the strongest case for community work, it was other events such as the Seebohm report which were able to ensure its development within social work...."

The Seebohm report on Local Authority and Allied Personal Social Services[16] published in 1968 explored, in Chapter 16, the need for a new relationship between social workers and their catchment areas. It emphasised an approach to the idea of community which is reminiscent of the social ecology and community integration traditions. Paragraph 977 reads:

> "The feeling of identity which membership of community bestows derives from the common values, attitudes and ways of behaving which the members have and which form the rules which guide social behaviour within it. Such rules are the basis of the strong social control over behaviour which is characteristic of highly integrated and long established communities. Powerful social control may, of course, stifle the individual and produce over conformity, but it is suggested that the incidence of delinquency is likely to be highest either where little sense of community, and hence social control, exists or where in a situation of strong social control the predominant community values are, in fact, potentially criminal. Such ideas point to the need for the social services to engage in the extremely difficult and complex task of encouraging and assisting the development of community identity and mutual aid, particularly in areas characterised by rapid population turnover, high delinquency,

> child deprivation and mental illness rates and other indices of social pathology...."

This emphasis on intevention in community life in areas considered to be socially problematic in fact associated community work in the social work context with areas of concentrated poverty but the motivating factors were more associated with deviancy and criminality borne of social pathological causes which were seen as characteristic of such areas. Later in the chapter it was acknowledged that 'community environment' can be 'a major impediment to healthy individual development.' The report goes on to say:

> "a sense of community (and all that implies) may need to be promoted among people for whom it does not exist whilst in recognisable communities effort may be needed to preserve and strengthen common identity and activity."

The philosophical orientation of the report is clear and its significance as the major influence on the growth of community work in the social work sector (including Scotland, although the report was about English and Welsh provision) should be acknowledged. Many social services departments and voluntary sector social work agencies became involved in community work through employing community workers, voluntary service organisers and promoting projects like Family Advice Centres. The fortunes of community work in these departments have fluctuated with subsequent changes in the philosophical orientation of community workers and their employers.

In Scotland the parallel developments in relation to the 1966 White Paper[17] and the Social Work Scotland Act were reflecting similar ideas and particularly the Section 12 duty to "promote social welfare" became a basis for community work to become established. The significance of

the White Paper lay in its reflection of a climate for the discussion of social welfare policy in Scotland which already anticipated directions later to be explored by Seebohm. In particular it looked at the combination of a wide range of local authority social welfare agencies in a unified department hence anticipating trends towards corporate approaches. But more significantly in relation to community work, it recognised the importance of supporting community initiatives in responding to their own needs. It suggested that the new department:

> "should have the power to provide all citizens, of whatever age and circumstances, with advice and guidance in the solution of personal and social difficulties".

It also commented on the:

> "less obvious but equally important need for cooperation at policy making and management levels, in the improvement and promotion of measures which would help both to prevent the occurance of these problems and to enable communities and individuals more readily to surmount problems and resolve tensions by their own efforts".

Despite this direction, as the next chapter will indicate, community work was in fact slower to develop in Scotland than in other parts of the United Kingdom.

Community Development Programme and Urban Programme

At the same time as the Seebohm Committee was deliberating the Home Office was planning the Urban Aid programme, central to which would be the promotion of the Community Development Projects (CDP). The model was derived from the War on Poverty programme in the U.S.A. in that it was to establish a funding partnership between central and local government in promoting projects in deprived urban areas. The

programmes involved 75% central government funding and 25% local authority funding to statutory and voluntary sector projects of three to five years duration. Announcing the Urban Aid Programme in the House of Commons in December 1968, the Home Secretary, James Callaghan,[18] described it as:

> "To provide for the care of our citizens who live in the poorest or most overcrowded parts of our cities and towns. It is intended to arrest, in so far as it is possible by financial means, and reverse the downward spiral which afflicts so many of these urban areas. There is a deadly quagmire of apathy."

The significance of the urban aid programme was that it was used by both voluntary and statutory sectors to promote community work activities. Significant numbers of capital and revenue projects moved in this direction. It remains in revised forms a major source of funding for community work. In 1984 Francis et al[19] reported that 20% of workers were directly funded from this source. Many other posts will initially have been funded in this manner before transfer to other sources of support.

The urban aid programme has then been extremely enabling in the growth of community work focussed on urban deprivation. As the quotation above indicates, there was a heavy emphasis on social pathological explanations of the causes of urban social problems. The organisation of the programme also laid heavy emphasis on the role of the state, particularly at local level, as gate-keeper to these resources since all projects, whether voluntary or statutory, are scrutinized for approval at both local authority and central government level.

The urban aid programme then has been of major significance in terms of total funding to community work projects, but it was the Community Development Project launched by the Home Office in 1969 using this funding source which was to be the single most influential programme in British Community Work. This was to be a programme of action/research projects in twelve areas jointly sponsored by the Home Office and the relevant local authority. The thinking behind it reflected some contradictions both about the explanations of the problems it was to tackle and the methods of practice it was to adopt. Official Home Office thinking seemed to reflect pathological explanations. An inter departmental working party report to the Cabinet, for example, described it as:[20]

> "a coordinated approach to the needs of individuals, families and the community as a whole",

whilst Richard Crossman[21] announcing the first of the projects, said: teams would:

> "try to mobilise untapped resources of self help and mutual aid existing among people in the community, even among those experiencing most difficulty standing on their own feet."

There was, on the other hand, a tacit recognition in the official briefing documents to the project teams that the problems could also be associated with deficiencies of public services themselves. The project was described as:[22]

> "a modest attempt at action and research into the better understanding and more comprehensive tackling of social needs especially in local communities within the older urban areas through closer coordination of central and local official and unofficial effort informed and stimulated by citizen initiative and involvement."

Later it said:

> "It is an essential part of the project that people in the localities where it operates should be given full and positive opportunity to express their needs and views and aspirations effectively - and that those seeking to cooperate with them should be receptive and sympathetic towards ideas and even criticisms that can result."

These perceptions of the role of the Community Development Project have to be set in the context of the more grandiose expectations such as those of Halsey who was an advisor to the programme who saw its role as:[23]

> "to produce a theory of poverty and test it in the very real world of the urban twilight zones".

It is ironic, given that the programme was so closely modelled on American anti-poverty programmes, that some of the outcomes in terms of the conflict between the explanations by the workers of the problems and the responses of the sponsors were not predicted, for Marris and Rein[24] were already stating in 1967 in their book 'The Dilemmas of Social Reform' that in relation to American programmes the agencies:

> "merely provided a new setting in which to deploy the struggle for power and generated not a self sustaining process of reform but a self sustaining conflict over the control of reform..."

The conflict arising from the changing explanations of the problems of the project areas was central to the experience of the Community Development Project. The projects individually and collectively moved from conservative pathological explanations to focus on the failings of the welfare service systems and then to explanations which located poverty as a direct and inevitable consequence of structural inequality in society. This process is well described by Benington[25] in relation

to the Coventry Project. Many projects worked with local people on self help programmes and service oriented campaigns, some of which led directly to confrontations with local authority sponsors, but became convinced that neither of these forms of action had capacity to address the underlying causes of the local problems. It is this pattern of events which leads Peter Hall[26] to the conclusion that:

> "overall they (C.D.P.'s) achieved limited results in terms of action but they helped to refute the prevailing notion that deprivation was merely a matter of small pockets in inner urban areas... They helped to shift the predominant paradigm away from poverty as seen in terms of individual misfortune or inadequacy to poverty as a result of powerful structural factors outside the individual's control!"

Though this radical critique was by no means the peculiar prerogative of Community Development Project workers, the high profile of the programme resulted in its analysis significantly influencing the outlook of British community workers. Whether the methods available to community workers can address the underlying structural factors is highly questionable, but the conventional wisdom of community work had been shifted. Local affairs were placed in the context of wider social economic and political processes; the previously predominant traditions of local social ecology, community integration, mutual aid and pathology based invervention were under challenge. Community work had become overtly political. The impartiality of the non-directive school was under challenge, community workers became more inclined to undertake their work from an explicitly structuralist analysis and socialist ideology.

It would be easy, however, to over-estimate the impact of this relatively small scale project for though the literature of community

work reflected these debates, how far mainstream practice actually changed is questionable. Indeed, clarification of this was an objective of the research discussed here.

Other initatives in the late 1960's

The emergence of the Community Development Project critique took place through the late sixties to mid seventies but it should not be seen in isolation from other simultaneous development. Returning to the late sixties, there were a number of other significant influences on the development of community work. 1968 had seen the establishment of the Education Priority Area (E.P.A.) programme which had promoted positive discrimination projects in education. The reports of this project made the direct connection between education and community development, for example, Halsey argued:[27]

> "Education priorities must in the end be integrated into community development. The Educational Priority Area School is impotent except in the context of a comprehensive organisation of social services or the community."

In the area of planning, community work was also making its influence felt in this period. Most significantly the Skeffington Committee[28] report 'People and Planning' had been published in 1969. The report recognised the importance of the participation of consumers in the planning process and specifically recommended the appointment of Community Development Officers by local authorities to compensate for the weakness of some groups in articulating their interests in relation to planning proposals. Though such proposals were not formally accepted in national policy terms, from this point many local authorities became

engaged in community development approaches to local planning in particular.

In the voluntary sector, interest in community work approaches was also expanding in the late sixties. Councils of Social Service were already involved in inter-organisational work but also began to promote neighbourhood projects. Agencies traditionally focussed on volunteering such as the Young Volunteer Force Foundation began to directly promote community development projects. It later renamed itself the Community Projects Foundation, and has recently been linked with the Gulbenkian Foundation in promoting a National Centre for Community Development. In the student world the process of radicalisation of student politics generally lead to a critique of voluntary social service activity and the emergence of the community work oriented Student Community Action movement.[29] In the same period activists from the CND became increasingly involved in the promotion of community action whilst Rachmanism and other housing market pressures were stimulating the emergence of the squatting movement. The latter seeming to revive a longstanding tradition of grass roots community action, which was also parallelled in the growth of the claimant's movement.

As a background to many of these initiatives, the changing racial demography of British inner cities was of great significance. Enoch Powell had delivered his allegedly prophetic 'Rivers of Blood' speech and the threat of a right wing working class backlash had been illustrated by the Smethwick by-election. There was a clamour to control immigration and at least ensure the integration of the minority ethnic groups into British culture. Mullard[30] has paraphrased the dominant viewpoint of the period:

> ".....black immigration control is not only a prerequisite for the creation of harmonious race relations, but it is also a vital component in the social armoury required to maintain social security and stability. These two chief objectives can only be achieved if the number of black immigrants seeking entry to the United Kingdom is rigorously controlled and encouraged to assimilate, integrate or coexist with other groups at appropriate or predesignated levels in the class structure."

It can be argued that a significant strand in the development and growth of community work in this period was directed towards the achievement of such objectives. Most particularly, the 1968 Race Relations Act, which lead to the establishment of local Community Relations Concils under the auspices of the Community Relations Commission, resulted in the emergence of a major group of community relations officers and allied race 'experts'. Though the nakedly integrationist stance of the late sixties is now much less dominant, there is a well established strand of community work specifically promoted by race relations institutions. Since 1976 the Commission for Racial Equality has been central to this. It is important to remember. however, how significant the race factor was in the emergence of inner urban policy from the late sixties and therefore its implicit significance for a very wide range of community work initiatives, though this is much less so in Scotland.

Development in the 1970's and 1980's

By the end of the 1960's[31] Baldock argues that there were four major strands to community work activity in the U.K.: these were in the contexts of social work, education, community relations and urban management. A few projects were operating from a generic stance, most

notably the Community Development Project, but the broad pattern has remained to the present. As Thomas[32] points out:

> "By the early 1970's more and more community workers were being employed in the statutory and voluntary agencies but, unfortunately there are no data that provide a reliable picture of the growth of the occupation."

With this caveat it will nonetheless be useful to trace briefly the development of community work in each of the sectors identified by Baldock.

Community Work & Social Work Departments

In the social work sector, figures quoted by Francis, Henderson and Thomas[33] from DHSS records show 396 workers in Social Services Departments of Local Authorities in 1976 rising steadily to 798 by 1981. Though it is not entirely accurate they indicate no employment of community workers in Scottish Social Work Departments until 1978. Their own survey shows 11% of the total of workers in 1983 in these departments (12% in Scotland) though this does not indicate the degree to which a social work orientation to community work may be current, for nearly 50% of workers were to be found employed in small voluntary sector agencies a large proportion of which may well operate similarly. Taking professional qualifications of workers as a guide, just 10% held social work qualifications.

Whatever the real proportion of social work oriented community workers, it is clear that it is a significant segment but it would be wrong to imagine that the growth in this sector has followed a consistent pattern in different parts of the country, as Francis,

Henderson and Thomas have shown, either in terms of the scale of the activity or the nature of the practice. Some authorities invested heavily in community work and then withdrew from it as others took it up. The current debate around the concept of community social work, thrown into sharp relief by the Barclay Committee Report[34], illustrates the broadly differing attitudes to the role of community work in social service departments ranging from almost complete rejection of the approach to predominantly community care models (see for example East Sussex)[35] to more extensive community development and occasionally action models (as in Sheffield or Strathclyde). This disparity in the nature of community work practice was also illustrated in the Crousaz and Davies[36] research on community work in London Boroughs. Approximately 70% of their worker sample were in social services departments and the work was dominated by a 'client' rather than a 'service' focus. They described the latter in Seebohm terms as 'making services more responsive to local needs', whilst the former was seen as being concerned with 'the formation of local groups to undertake self help activities and organise social events'. This client focussed work was shown to vary in orientation though the researchers only distinguished between community development models and community action models. Their definition of these terms is not one which I share, nonetheless, their evidence does demonstrate that community work in social services departments encompasses a wide range of activities from conservative to radical. This same pattern of variation was also illustrated in the earlier Thomas and Warburton research in 'Exshire'.[37] They distinguished between 'exogenous' workers and 'endogenous' workers

and showed how even within one authority the personal orientations of workers could lead to quite different priorities and patterns of work.

The pattern of development of community work in the social work sector then has been complex as a result of different orientations of authorities over time and the infinite variety of interactions between individual workers and the policies of their employing agencies. The evidence from this study of Strathclyde Social Work Department clearly illustrates this complexity.

Community Work & Education Departments

Tracing the pattern of development in the education sector is an even more difficult business than in social work, not least because there is a basic dispute in community work about what elements of activity promoted by education departments actually constitute community work. This is vividly illustrated by the Francis et al material where the definition of community work employed resulted in the conclusion that in establishing the numbers of community workers in the U.K., youth and community workers in England, Wales and Northern Ireland would be excluded whilst community education workers in Scotland would be included. This reflects the view that the emergence in Scotland of community education following the Alexander Report,[38] orients it to a more developmental and neighbourhood focus than the youth club and community centre management focus elsewhere. Whilst I sympathise with this distinction it has meant that it is difficult to give a clear indication of developments. In Scotland the Francis et al research suggests that as many as 63% of community workers are employed in Education Departments whereas by their definition this only applies to

19% in the rest of the country. However, even this figure shows Education Departments to be a substantially larger employer than Social Service/Work Departments in 1983.

Other Settings

The community relations segment is smaller than social work or education. Francis et al indicates that 4% of workers were employed by Community Relations Councils in 1983 but this is not a reasonable indication of the degree to which community workers engage with this sort of activity for many operating from other statutory and voluntary sector agencies are heavily involved. In the period from 1970 to the present perhaps the most significant trend in this area has been the employment of workers from the ethnic minority communities.

Again in relation to urban management no precise indications can be provided as to the scale of this sort of activity. It might be anticipated that employment in Chief Executives and Planning Departments might be more oriented in this direction (though Crousaz and Davies do not entirely support this). However these appear to represent only a very small percentage of community work employment. On the other hand there have been a number of urban management projects in the last decade which have involved community work - apart from the Community Development Project, notably, the 1975 Home Office Comprehensive Community Programmes, projects arising from the Inner City Partnership Programme of the Department of the Environment and projects like the Glasgow Eastern Area Renewal Project of the Scottish Development Department. Many of these have involved workers from other sectors engaging in urban management related activities.

A divided occupation

The emergence of these various strands of community work has ensured that a clearly defined occupational group has not been established for each group sustains a relationship to its sponsors which inhibits the establishment of common institutions for community work. Notably, the Gulbenkian Foundation has sustained a significant interest in drawing community work together. Following its 1968[39] and 1973[40] reports the Foundation became actively involved in the promotion of the idea of a national forum for community work which was seen as a mechanism for representing the interests of community work to central government. This notion was however rejected by a conference of community workers called by the Gulbenkian Foundation in 1977. The objections related to fears about the degree to which such a development would institutionalise relationships between community workers and the state within a concensual framework of practice. The idea of a national forum to represent community work was also seen as inimical to the principles of community work which emphasise the empowerment of local people in their own communities rather than representative activity on their behalf by a professional forum. Despite this rejection however, the Foundation has continued to pursue an interest in developing a national Centre for community development. A further working party produced a proposal to this effect in 1984[41] though with emphasis on information exchange rather than national representation of community work interests.

Throughout the period one of the major critics of the Gulbenkian proposals has been the Association of Comunity Workers. At its inception it was closely associated with the British Association of

Social Workers and from 1968 to 1971 it operated as a closed membership professional association. However the growing anti-professionalism of community work in the 1970's lead to the opening of its membership to anyone describing themselves as a community worker, employed or not. Though at times quite vociferous the A.C.W. is a minority organisation, the large majority of community workers never having belonged to it, especially those from the local authority departments, particularly Education. Similarly, the Federation of Community Work Training Groups, whose membership largely overlapped with A.C.W., failed to engage the interests of the majority of community workers. Indeed in many ways the formal organisations of community workers nationally have been operating to resist general trends in community work towards professionalisation of a traditionally exclusive nature. As the Francis[42] et al study demonstrates, the majority of community workers are 'much more highly educated than the population as a whole' - 51% hold degrees or equivalent though 50% have not had formal training specific to community work. Where local activists have been employed in community work it is noticeable how they aspire to professional qualification and the rewards of professional status.

The influence of gender and race

From the mid 1970's to the present two other major trends have emerged in community work thinking and practice which it is important to consider before completing this summary of the history of the occupation. One is the emergence of black activist community workers the other the increasing influence of feminism. How far these two influences have affected mainstream practice is open to question but in

the literature and the institutions of community work, particularly the A.C.W., they have been highly significant. Both emphasise the transformation of conciousness and, in their emphasis on the relationship between the personal and the political, have come to challenge some of the assumptions of the structural class analysis in community work emerging through the Community Development Project experience.

Black workers have organised within community work to promote anti-racist work. Their analysis has emphasised the pervasiveness and the institutional nature of racism in British society including community work itself. It has not replaced a class analysis but produced a new dimension in the debate which transcends class. Black writers in community work like Ohri and Manning[43] have argued for example that:

> "In Britain white racism is not highlighted as a primary issue; instead, courses for community workers or teachers or social workers, if they give any attention to the issue of racism at all, concentrate on 'understanding them, their different cultures and life styles' in order to 'deal with them better'. There is less concentration therefore on racism as a pervading phenomenon and more on the victims of racism as a 'phenomenon for study' to improve 'understanding'. The net effect is that racism is reduced to 'racial disadvantage' and how to address the 'inherent' disadvantage. In so doing 'the victims' become equated with 'the problems'."

Alongside the concern with racism has arisen a concern with sexism. The feminist analysis in community work has emphasised the political nature of every day domestic relationships and generated a recognition of the centrality of women as actors in community affairs. Hanmer and Rose[44] have argued:

> "Despite the influence of the CDP critique... the theory sat ill at ease with the personal experience of women community workers. Gradually sustained by a movement whose epistemology affirmed personal experience as a

> legitimate means of knowing the world an alternative construction of feminist theory and practice began to be forged."

The practicality of the analysis is more clearly stated by Wilson[45] when she says:

> "The reality of community life as opposed to the romantic dream image, is women living in a direct relationship to the state as mediated through housing departments, schools and the state welfare system which supports the family. The division of labour within the family usually means that it is women who go to the rent office, women who attempt to grapple with the schools, women who are interviewed by the social worker."

In the 1980's the radical wing of community work has been heavily influenced by both feminist and anti-racist analysis.

Concluding comment

Given the variety of influences in its development both conservative and radical, it will be apparent that current practice, as a reflection of this, will be complex and varied. Community work appears to be a divided occupation. The divisions are ones which are not disimilar to those in other occupations. Social workers for example vary greatly in terms of their explanations of personal social distresses and the nature of change which is considered appropriate. Similarly there are radical to conservative continua in medicine, the law or teaching. Those with radical aspirations for social change through their professional activities often experience tensions with the institutional environment of their practice. Community work is not therefore unique, though more than other occupations it has tended to be perceived as generally radical in orientation. This is probably a

reflection of the late 1960's period from which it grew most rapidly and in which there seemed to be a belief amongst workers that in some way it would escape the institutional constraints experienced by radicals in other occupations.

Community work operates in a broad range of settings but it will be apparent from the discussion in this chapter that, particularly in the last twenty years, it has developed a very close relationship with the state which either controls it directly, usually through local authority departments, or indirectly by acting as gatekeeper in terms of access to funds for the voluntary sector. Even sponsorship from charitable trusts, which is not uncommon, tends to be investment in experimental or demonstration projects with a view to such activities, if successful, being adopted in the mainstream. The incorporation of community work within the institutional power structure of British society clearly creates potential conflicts for an occupation which, perhaps rather romatically and irrationally, seemed to believe it could operate outwith these tensions.

The relationship between community work and the state as its sponsor is one which has been a subject of controversy in community work circles. Main themes in the debate are discussed in the final chapters but it is important to recognise at this stage that the focus of this research project has been on a local authority which has invested heavily in community work activity as part of an anti-deprivation strategy. In formulating its policy it has been aware of the history of community work and has been subject to the influence of many of the debates around the functions of the activity. The workers who are the subject of the research are therefore practicing in the context of state

sponsorship and, though it is not being suggested that all local authority sponsors hold the same dispositions towards community work, there are general lessons which may be learned. More specifically, this is a study of community work in a social work department and much of the material reflects the particular dilemmas of this practice context. As will be shown, however, many of the workers studied are not from a social work background but have been influenced both in training and previous experience by community work practice in other settings.

Before moving to a discussion of the research project and the evidence which it has produced, it is important to examine the particular orientation of Strathclyde Regional Council and its social work department to the employment of community workers. This is the subject of the next chapter.

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# Chapter 2

## Community Work in Strathclyde

This study focusses on community work in the Social Work Department of Strathclyde Regional Council, however it will be useful to place this in the context of the broader history of community work in the Region.

As noted in the previous chapter, the development of community work in Scotland generally has been later than elsewhere in the UK though its growth by the time of this research was more extensive than in the rest of the country showing a ratio of 24.7 per 100,000 population compared with 9.7 for the UK overall.[1] The ratio in Strathclyde was typical of Scotland as a whole though the Social Work Department has a substantially greater investment in community work than other Scottish departments. Figures drawn from the Scottish Education Department Statistical Bulletin show that in October 1982 (the closest date to the sample selection for this study) there were 202 community workers employed in Scottish social work departments. Though it should be borne in mind that their definition of community work includes categories of worker excluded from this research, most particularly voluntary service organisers, playgroup organisers, street warden organisers and community service officers, the general growth through the decade so far is clearly illustrated. In October 1980 there were 155 community workers but this had risen to 330 by 1985. Of particular interest is the fact that the Strathclyde share has been nearly 90%, its total for 1985 being 288 workers. However, though it was employing

approximately 120 workers at the time of this research (by the definition specified in Chapter 3), there were more than twice this number of workers in the Education Department. The growth to this situation reflects a history of small scale and sporadic development in both the statutory and voluntary sectors prior to local government reorganisation in Scotland in 1975 followed by a sharp increase in investment by the newly formed Regional Council.

Early History of Community Work in the Region - statutory initiatives

In the pre-reorganisation period, two of the local authorities later to be drawn into the Regional Council had been hosts to central government projects. In the Ferguslie Park area of Paisley was located the only Scottish Community Development Project project, whilst the Craigneuk area of Motherwell was the setting for the only Scottish Comprehensive Community Project. Though the Ferguslie Community Development Project project played its part in the national developments it tended to be rather geographically isolated and concentrated on neighbourhood development work and action research, particularly focussed around public sector housing issues of lettings maintenance and repairs, employment and advice and information services. The Craigneuk project despite the grand title was also focussed on neighbourhood work rather than the corporate local planning orientations of its English counterparts. In that both of these projects provided local focus for the debates developing more extensively south of the border, they were significant in contributing to the preconditions which influenced later Regional policy.

The local authorities themselves, prior to reorganisation, had not generally become involved in community work but there were some notable and significant exceptions. In the education departments of the pre-reorganisation authorities, the Alexander report[2] recorded 45 community centre warden posts in 1972 but these appear to have largely focussed on the management of centre based service provision. In Ayrshire, however, almost in anticipation of the direction to be taken by the Alexander Committee report, there had been the emergence of outreach work from community centres to local neighbourhoods, thus placing workers from this setting in a much more developmental than service providing role.

It is worth noting that the Regional Council Policy Review Group[3] on community development services which reported two years after reorganisation said:

> "Community education, reflecting community development principles, has had only limited impact to date on the education department itself though there are notable exceptions in particular areas and particular schools."

The developments in the education sector were acknowledged then as limited and there was an implicit indication in the statement that not all community education work could be equated with community development. This latter point reveals that the debate about the role of workers in education departments was at that stage, at least, as alive as it is in England and Wales and raises questions about whether numbers of workers are a reliable indicator of the extent of community work involvement by different departments.

More significant in relation to the focus of this research on the social work sector, there had been neighbourhood community development

initiatives established in the Gibshill and Strone and Maukinhill areas of Greenock. The former, initiated in 1969[4] adopted a generally non-directive stance towards the development of the community which began to develop and run services for itself particularly in the area of youth provision though also campaigning effectively on the issue of housing improvement. The latter, starting a few years later, was to reflect a growing national trend towards corporate management and formalised structures of community participation in the development of community planning. The project involved the employment of a community planner in the Planning Department alongside a community worker in the Social Work Department. In evaluating this project[5], the workers were sceptical about the effectiveness of the consultative procedures adopted to involve local people in the planning of their areas but more positive about the direct campaigning activities of community groups over local issues. In that later Regional policy was to include similar local corporate management and participation procedures this is a significant conclusion.

Significant too is the fact that prime movers behind the Greenock projects, the Social Work Director, , and his Chairman, Councillor , were to continue to be highly influential in the development of community work in the post reorganisation period.

Early history of community work in the Region - Voluntary activities

In the period prior to reorganisation the voluntary sector had also produced significant initiatives though mainly in Glasgow. The chief exception to this was the Strone and Maukinhill Informal Education

Project in Greenock[6] which was sponsored by the Rowntree Trust. It focussed on the promotion of locally based adult education initiatives responding to locally expressed needs. Councillor was again influential in the promotion of this project.

It was in Glasgow, however that the most influential voluntary sector initiative had developed. This was the Crossroads Youth and Community Assocation in Gorbals and later Govanhill[7]. It grew out of the worker priest movement, a group ministry having been founded in the area in the late fifties oriented to social action. They launched the first community newspaper in Scotland and became involved in a variety of housing campaigns, play projects, youth provision and other activities. From an emphasis on advocacy roles on the behalf of the community the group became more involved in the promotion of community run initiatives. When formally established in 1967 the Crossroads organisation was created to manage two youth workers and still consisted largely of outsiders to the area. It later promoted two student units for the training of community workers and it was pressure from the staff of the units which led to Crossroads management being taken over by local people. From a service tradition, not dissimilar to the settlement movement, therefore, emerged a community managed organisation which in the period just before and after local government reorganisation became involved in a highly conflictual community action campaign against damp housing in the newly developed Gorbals.

The early animateur of much of this development was the Rev. who, as a Labour councillor and the first Convenor of Strathclyde Regional Council was to be a very significant influence in the early policy developments on deprivation and community work.

The community action tradition with which Crossroads has come to be associated (though it in fact continues also to be extensively involved in service oriented activity) was not extensive in Glasgow but the Gairbraid tenants campaign[8] over redevelopment is also worthy of note.

Local Government Reorganisation - Social conditions in Strathclyde

By the time of local government reorganisation in 1975 therefore there were a number of dispersed developments which were influential in the emergence of a deprivation strategy, not least because key figures in these initiatives moved into powerful political and administrative positions in the new structure. The conditions for innovation were enhanced by the creaton of a new authority, of scale, with a sense of its own power and unfettered by defensiveness about historical failures to address problems of deprivation.

The reorganisation of local government in Scotland, following the Local Government Scotland Act 1973, which was based on a structure of Regional and District Councils, led to the creation of Strathclyde as the largest local authority in Scotland. The Region, which has a population of 2½ million people includes nearly half the Scottish population. Though the Region encompasses a wide hinterland of the Highlands and Islands to the north and west and the lowlands to the south, its population is concentrated around Glasgow and the industrial towns of the Clyde Valley like Greenock and Dumbarton in the west, Hamilton and Motherwell to the south. Though Glasgow exhibited the worst features, all of these Clyde corridor towns were shown in the 1971 census to be suffering from a high degree of multiple deprivation

relative to other parts of the United Kingdom. Holterman[9] in an analysis of the 1971 census data states:

> "No English conurbation is in the same league as Strathclyde in terms of deprivation."

Taking the enumeration districts with conditions which locate them in the worst 5% in the UK, the number of such districts in Strathclyde as a percentage of the enumeration districts in the conurbation on five key indicators was as shown in Table 2.1.

Comparing Strathclyde with Scotland as a whole, the Region contained 90% of the enumeration districts in the worst 1%, 80% of those in the worst 2 - 5% and 79% of those in the worst 6-10%.

One quarter of all children lived in overcrowded houses and the infant mortality rate was twice the national average. Evidence from the National Child Development Study reinforced this picture in its report 'Born to Fail''[10]. Though the statistics were not published until 1982, the second report of the study 'Children in Adversity'[11] relating to 16 year olds in 1974 said:

> "Our earlier study highlighted the problems of Scotland particularly the Glasgow area, and our new findings confirm the situation. Ten per cent of Scottish children were disadvantaged at 11 or 16, twice the proportion in England and Wales."

Local Government Reorganisation - the emergence of a social strategy

The Labour controlled Council which took office in Strathclyde in 1975 was committed to make a response to these conditions and evolved a social strategy to combat deprivation. One of the central features of this strategy was to be community development. From a few pockets of

Table 2.1 Comparison of Strathclyde with next worst connurbation in relation to percentage of enumeration districts falling into the worst 5% for the U.K. on five indicators of deprivation (Source: Halterman)

| Variable | Strathclyde | Next Worst Conurbation |
|---|---|---|
| Overcrowding (+ 1.5 persons per room) | 44% | 14% (Inner London) |
| Household share or lack hot water | 18% | 17% (Inner London) |
| Household without exclusive use of all amenities | 16% | 13% (Inner London) |
| Household with no car | 30% | 18% (Tyneside) |
| Economically active males unemployed but seeking work | 27% | 18% (Merseyside) |

community work activity prior to reorganisation, grew a major commitment to community work. The initial council statement on multiple deprivation'[12] focussed on three responses to the problem: increased corporate working; community development and regeneration, and the identification of Areas of Priority Treatment for positive discrimination in the deployment of council resources.

This strategy was based on an eclectic view of the causal explanations of poverty and deprivation. The report talked of three factors:

> "First, the main issues, which are nationwide and arise out of the socio-economic situation which has emerged in the West of Scotland since the 1950's....Secondly, the difficulties arising from the attitudes, nature and scale of provision of public services - health education, police, social work, transport, leisure and recreation, housing, cleansing, job centres and social benefitcs.....Thirdly, the problems associated with the communities themselves."

How adequate the responses proposed could be to the way the problems were defined was obviously an open question for whilst structural and institutional arguments were being recognised the Council acknowledged that its services tended to presume pathological explanations. However, it began by identifying 45 areas to be given priority in terms of local authority services and a further report 'Areas of need - the next step''[13] was prepared, particularly exploring the approach to be taken in the seven areas selected as Special Initiative areas. In these areas there was to be special attention to local corporate working supported through the appointment of Area Initiative Co-ordinators employed by the Chief Executives' Department.

A Community Development Policy

Also following the Multiple Deprivation report, the Council set up a policy review group[14] on community development which, in commenting on earlier multiple deprivation strategy reports, stated:

> "Those documents identified the need for a coordinated effort by our departments and by regions and districts, a failure by our departments to deal in terms of people rather than tasks, poor information services, a sense of estrangement from councillors and M.P.'s; the need for stimulation of self help activities and local leadership; and the need for authorities to allow communities a genuine voice in the running of their areas."

The same report went on to suggest that "every Regional employee must come to see himself as a community development worker" but its concentration was on the development of community work in the Social Work and Education Departments of the Authority. In identifying its perception of the community work task the report stated:

> "community work is essentially two pronged - the worker should not only be concerned with meeting the needs of the groups with which he works in the community, but also with working within his own department so as to improve its internal knowledge of community problems and aspirations in the hope of ultimately modifying its policies and practices in ways which are to the communities advantage."

The report stressed the need for realism about the outcomes of community work. Criticising what were seen as the grandiose ambitions of the national Community Development Project and other earlier programmes it comments:

> "there was then a feeling that community work could solve the problems of deprived areas. This is about as realistic as expecting a flea to push an elephant uphill."

The Policy Review Group on Community Development Services set the basic framework within which the Regional Council has promoted community

work activity for the last decade. The group decided not to establish a separate community development department but to sustain a significant community development presence in both the Social Work and Education Departments, however, it did propose the establishment of a Community Development Committee to 'secure coordination of community development services throughout the Region' and 'manage Community Education and Social Work Community Development including responsibility for resource allocation'. A full committee of the Council therefore took responsibility for a particular part of the activities of two of its service departments which remained responsible to their own committees.

The policy review group also proposed the establishment of Area Development Teams. These were to be local corporate management and community participation structures not dissimilar to those that had been employed by the Strone and Maukinhill Community Planning project. They would consist of:

> "a core group of workers from the Departments of Education, Social Work (and where possible) Strathclyde Police"

and:

> "would be chaired by the local Regional member."

They would:

> "seek the active cooperation of District members/officers and Community Councils".

Their functions included identifying community needs and 'coordinated' solutions, liaison with community councils and voluntary organisations, study and comment on the deployment of community work staff and resources and monitoring of the impact of Council policies.

This proposal and the subsequent development of the teams illustrates a tension in the regional policy between a corporate management/community planning approach operating through participation procedures limited to the statutarily institutionalised Community Councils and a more radical approach based on the provision of support to local community groups to operate on their own issues in their own terms. This tension is well illustrated by comparison of the underlying ideology of the policy review group report and the 1984 consultative report of the Director of Social Work 'Helping the community to Organise'.[15]

Community Development in the Social Work Department

In his report the Director of Social Work has clarified the philosophical basis and objectives for community work in his department. An extensive commitment to community work is justified by reference to the statutory obligation of social work authorities under the 1968 Social Work (Scotland) act to 'promote Social Welfare' and further supported by reference to Scottish Office circulars following that Act. In particular he quotes Circular (SW11/69)[16] which notes that the promotion of social welfare involves:

> "the development of conditions whether for individuals, for families or for larger groups, which will enable them to deal with difficulties as they arise through their own resources or with the help of the resources of their own community".

The Director's consultative document states:

> "The basic distinguishing feature of community work is that its primary focus within the process of community development is on assisting communities to organise around locally defined needs and issues".

It goes on later to state:

> "community work involves a form of "dialogue" between residents and workers who are also accountable to their employing agency for the content of their activities".

Throughout the ten years development of community work in the Region there has therefore been a dual emphasis on the promotion of autonomous local community organisations and on working within the departments of the Regional Council to better inform and influence their policies and service delivery. Workers are, however, both accountable to the agency by reflecting its policies whilst simultaneously influencing their evolution and change. This is a situation ripe for experience of role confusion and the evidence of the research study emphasises some of these problems.

Tensions in Regional Community Development Policy

Comparison of the policy review group report and the later consultative document reveals differences in orientation to community work within the Regional Council but so too do the performance criteria for community work suggested by the former when compared with the explanations of deprivation favoured in the Council's 'Multiple Deprivation' report of 1976. The review group suggested:

> "reduced crime, reduced vandalism, reduction in the rate of emigration from an area, better services through pressure, staffing stability, more clubs and societies and high membership, provision of community facilities."

Such criteria suggest more pathological explanations of the problem than the more structural explanations favoured in the original policy document.

Claims that the Regional Council has a coherent and consistent policy for community work should therefore be questioned[16].

In view of the focus of this research on community work practice in the Social Work Department it is worth dwelling more extensively on the practice philosophy indicated by the Directors consultative report. Further to the quotations above he goes on to say:

> "Its emphasis is on promoting forms of local social organisation which are self determining and relatively autonomous. Within the terms of the Council's social strategy, this involves assisting disadvantaged communities to mobilise their interests, skills and resources around current needs or issues in such a way as to achieve desired or realistic change."

> "There are a number of intended outcomes of community organisations of this kind. Effective local community organisations will define and express local needs in ways which require a response from local authority services and from within the community's own resources. This should result in improved local services both by and for the community. It will also involve increased community access to resources and to the processes of decision-making regarding local resource allocation."

Later he states:

> "Whatever the position, <u>The community worker's role is never that of representing or speaking on behalf of the community, nor is it to be the advocate of Council policies to the community</u>. The worker's primary concern is to assist the community to maintain a dialogue with the authority at a level and in a form appropriate to the issue in question. In this sense the community worker is not a "mediator" bringing sides together, but more of a "consultant" and an enabler to the community."

The objectives of practice identified in the Director's consultative document, though suggesting some inconsistency with earlier statements of intent in the community development policy review report, are

however consistent with the most recent policy statement on the deprivation strategy. The report 'Social Strategy for the Eighties (1985)'[7] recognises some of the confused expectations surrounding community development by the Regional Council. It identifies progress in terms of the establishment of the Community Development Committee, the appointment of an increased number of community workers, a £2m a year budget for community projects, the establishment of 20 Area Development Teams, the organisation of six community conferences and the setting up of a decentralised system of small grants committees. However it goes on to say:

> "The 'community approach' has become a fashionable phrase which conceals more than it reveals. There seems to be a consensus about the desirability of something called community development/involvement/participation. But behind that consensus lies confusion. At one extreme it may reflect a deliberate or unconscious attempt to ensure a more orderly acceptance of policies and services: at another it might express a genuine desire to shift the balance of political power. In between there is a lot of confusion - and no little paternalism with assumptions that it is communities, or groups within communities, who need changing or developing. It is our view that it was rather the policies and procedures of public agencies that needed changing or developing. In espousing community development we needed the active support of residents. Support here does not mean harmonious consensus. Many people in local government seem to think that clients of statutory services should have a subservient and grateful relationship to local government and that collective organisation and protest is impertinent and unseemly.
>
> What they seem to want from community involvement is public approval if not applause! By 'support' we mean strong collective organisation to press from below - whether by example or by argument - for the sorts of improvements we indicated in 1976 we wished to see from our nominal positions of power. Because what many of us have recognised is the illusion of being able to use such power and authority to engage on our own in significant change."

This extract from the Regional policy statement of 1985 indicates the climate of debate about community work surrounding the workers who became the subject of the research. Some of the confusions and controversies in the character of their activities and their perceptions of them reflect debates within their employing authority. The workers no doubt both contributed to the debate and were caught up in the tensions between paternalistic models and expectations of practice and models oriented to the empowerment of community organisations. By 1985 the Regional Council was clearly acknowledging models of the latter kind but it does appear to be a considerable shift from some of the assumptions made about the purposes of community development in the early stages of the policy development when the Worthington Report[18] identified 'four persistent threads' in the idea of community development. First: 'The creation of a sense of belonging to an area and the strengthening of community networks.....' Second: 'the encouragement and stimulation of self-help activities.....' Third: 'The identification and stimulation of local leadership....' Fourth: 'The need for an effective respectful and sympathetic response by the authorities in making resources available and in providing services appropriate to the area's needs.....' Though the last of these goes on to refer to 'devolving power' and 'increasing community influence on decisions' the general tenor of the theoretical orientation harks back to conservative models of practice and contrast markedly with references to 'collective organisation and protest' in the Social Strategy for the Eighties extract.

The policy context for the practice of the workers studied here is therefore potentially confusing, though relative to many employment contexts it appears to give scope to community work activity across a range of approaches.

General Comment

Comparison of the discussion of the situation in Strathclyde with the material in the first chapter on developments of community work in the UK as a whole indicates not only the relatively later development of the activity north of the border but also the degree to which it is focussed within local authority departments. It may be argued that the social, political and economic conditions surrounding the emergence of community work in Strathclyde were markedly different from those prevailing a decade earlier when community work in other parts of the United Kingdom was at its take off point. The mid-sixties was the period of the so called 'rediscovery of poverty'. Macmillan's 'never had it so good' era was being demonstrated by Townsend, Abel-Smith and others not to be a universal experience. Poverty was perceived, however, against a backcloth of growing prosperity. A belief in continued economic growth and affluence based on a technologically advanced productive base seemed to hold within it the potential for eradication of poverty as a phenomenon. The late sixties too, particularly for the educated young, was a period in which there was a sense of optimism about the potential for political and social change illustrated most forcibly in the eruption of radical direct action politics of protest. Movements like Students for a Democratic Society in the United States, the anti-Vietnam war protests, the Civil Rights

movement, the French alliance between students and workers culminating in the near revolutionary situation of May 1968, the Czechoslovakian liberalisation movement and other similar events around the world were reflected in the youth politics of Britain. Many workers entering community work in the late sixties had themselves been political activists and were drawn to the activity as an expression of their personal ideologies. They seemed to be imbued with a belief in the potential for the creation of radical social change through the mobilisation of disadvantaged people in their own communities. What is more, the language of some of the official documents of programmes like the Community Development Project seemed to contain within them similar hopes, though as Chapter one has suggested these were often internally contradictory.

Community work in this period therefore emerged as an expression of radical aspiration at a time when there was optimism and energy for change. As was suggested in the previous chapter, however, the realities of practice soon lead workers to question the sophistication of their analysis of the problems. With increasing understanding of the intractability of the structural roots of many of the problems, optimism gave way to a sense of disillusion for some and realism for many. The large hopes contrasted with the small realities.

It is highly pertinent then that by the time community work took off into significant growth in Strathclyde the era of romantic optimism in community work was almost over. However, it can be aruged that it was not only that understanding had changed but that in many senses the West of Scotland had never been the cradle of the affluent society. Indeed, as the statistics from the 1971 census quoted earlier indicate, the

conurbation had a record of social disadvantage unparallelled in mainland Britain. Poverty was a much more pervasive condition, as such it was probably much less easy to romanticise about the potential for its elimination. Community work as part of a deprivation strategy emerged without expression of the grandiose expectations which accompanied it in the late sixties. Indeed, Regional Council policy statements specifically acknowledged the degree to which many of the problems were outside of the scope of local influence and stressed the need for realism.

These differences of historical context are highly significant and should be bourne in mind when exploring the evidence of this research not only in terms of what the workers actually spend their time doing but also in terms of the aspirations that they hold for their work.

The dominance of employment of community workers in local authority departments in Strathclyde is a further distinction from other parts of the United Kingdom though not other parts of Scotland. In part this too may be a reflection of the period of its development in that not having extensively experimented with community work during its early highly volatile period the local authority avoided some of the destructive conflicts experienced elsewhere in the country. It was able to learn from these and develop its use of the approach in a much more considered way. Whilst there are still inconsistencies within Regional policy for community work, arguably Strathclyde has one of the most developed and explicit policy frameworks for the practice of community work which it was able to formulate in the light of almost a decade of developments elsewhere, as well as experience in its own locality. Though, significantly, the latter was at a time when the

Regional Council had not yet been created and was not therefore required to manage it.

There are other possible explanations for the dominance of statutory sector employment of community workers in the Region. In particular it should be acknowledged that the figures provided by Francis et al in the previous chapter may distort the relative degree of statutory employment due to the inclusion of their figures of community education workers in Scotland but exclusion of youth and community workers in England and Wales. Given that 63% of Scottish workers were found to be employed in Education departments, the scale of this potential distortion becomes apparent. Nonetheless, even if the education departments are excluded from the figures there is still a smaller proportion of workers employed in the voluntary sector than elsewhere in the United Kingdom. This is particularly the case in Strathclyde, though it is not the case that voluntary agency employment is particularly limited so much as that statutary employment is particularly extensive. Its extensiveness appears to derive from the view of both key politicians and officers of the Regional Council that if it were to respond to the problems of deprivation in its area it should do so in co-operation with the community itself. To do this it was necessary to generate the internal mechanisms in the disadvantaged areas such that they would be able to give expression to their concerns and enter into participation with the council. Community work was the means to achieve this. However, this does not explain why Strathclyde Regional Council should choose to adopt this approach when other Scottish Regional Authorities and their equivalents in the English Metropolitan County Councils generally have not.

It may be argued that the Scottish Regions, having more extensive powers, particularly in the areas of Education and Social Work, have the organisational means to develop community work or, perhaps more significantly to develop integrated social policy for their areas. However, this does not explain why Strathclyde is the exception amongst Scottish Regional Councils. In this respect the explanation may lie partly in the concentration of the problems of urban Scotland within its boundaries and partly in its sheer scale. However, the political conditions in terms of the apparently almost unassailable position of the Labour party in controlling the Regional Council which make it possible to develop long term planned approaches to change in the expectation of continuity of power may be more significant. In my view though, the critical factors may well be to do with time specific conditions which created the potential for innovation.

The emergence of key individuals both members and officers who were positively disposed to the use of community work methods in a newly formed and potentially powerful authority, with a Labour Government in power, ideologically committed to respond to the relatively disadvantaged position of the Region and themselves untainted by a defensiveness about earlier failure to effectively address these conditions, were probably the key factors. (In Lothian Region in the same period similar political values were being expressed but unlike Strathclyde the region was politically marginal and similar innovations seem not to have taken root in the same way.)

Hall et al[3] have argued that three main criteria determine the significance that an issue achieves in policy terms. Firstly, its legitimacy, in which they ask: 'is this an issue with which government

considers it should be concerned.' Secondly, its feasibility, in which they identify three major factors, 'the structure and distribution of theoretical and technical knowledge'; 'particular ideologies, interests, prejudices and information' and 'concern about resources, collaboration and administrative capacity'. Thirdly, the level of support is identified as crucial though whose support is significant varies under different conditions. In other words it is not simply a matter of electoral support but may equally relate to party political support or professional/ administrative support.

Adopting these three criteria it can be argued that the publication of the analysis of the 1971 census results legitimised deprivation as a central policy concern for the Regional Council, for the disadvantages of the region were a subject of national debate and concern in social policy terms. The adoption of a community work approach to this problem is less easily understood in terms of legitimacy for by 1975 the conflicts surrounding the activity particularly as a result of the Community Development Projects were well known. However, in relation to these conflicts key people in Strathclyde were publicly identified with the arguments of the project staff rather than their sponsors. Indeed, the early policy documents on the deprivation strategy, even if sceptical about the degree of change which could result, drew directly from analysis generated in the Community Development Project programme. In terms of feasibility it has been noted that in formulating their policies the Strathclyde planners were able to draw on the acquired knowledge and technical skills tested in earlier community work projects. There also existed among key influential people an ideological commitment to and interest in community work as an approach and,

potentially, the urban programme provided the resource base from which the plans could be implemented. In terms of support the electoral base may not have been that important though it was an explicit commitment of the Labour party to tackle deprivation, for the power base was felt to be secure. The internal support of the labour members was probably more significant. Officer support existed in key positions though one of the continuing problems of the authority has been to generate a general level of officer commitment to the purposes and processes of the deprivation strategy.

Combined then these factors appear to have prompted the innovations which this research has explored.

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# PART II

## Methods

# Chapter 3

## Methods of Research

In the introduction to the study the aims of the research were explored. In summary, they were to explore the ways in which community workers working in a local authority social work department spend their time, to discover what motivates them and to examine their view of the other parties to the process of community work - the community itself, their managers and the elected members of the Regional Council. In so doing, it was considered important to know something of the characteristics of the workers themselves. Decisions about the depth and extensiveness of the study and the methods adopted were significantly influenced by the resources available.

### Resources for the research

It will be clear from the foregoing material that a number of people were involved in this research project. It attracted two forms of sponsorship, firstly, the secondment of four part-time workers on a short term basis from Strathclyde Regional Council Social Work Department, secondly, a small grant from the Social Work Services Group of the Scottish Office sufficient to employ a part-time research assistant for three months and cover administrative costs. It is important therefore to clarify my own role relative to that of other workers.

I was entirely responsible for the design, piloting, management and write-up of the research. I also carried primary responsibility for

the analysis of the raw data. The Region seconded three community workers on a one day per week basis for the period February to May 1983 to work on data collection. They were given training by me in the data collection methods described in the next section and took primary responsibility for contact with individual respondents whilst I provided back-up support and supervision of their work.

The fourth seconded worker joined me on a one day per week basis for approximately four months in the Autumn of 1983 to assist in analysis of data from workers recordings and was responsible specifically for collaborative work on the content analysis. The worker employed for three days per week from June to September 1983 on S.W.S.G. funds worked with me on the time budget analysis of worker recordings. In relation to both these workers, who were knowledgeable about community work, there was collaboration in identifying the most appropriate categorisation of activities for analysis. The recordings, amounting to nearly 1,500 pages of handwritten material, were scrutinised by all three of us to check the consistency with which different activities were being categorised. I took final responsibility for classification and procedures to be adopted but am indebted to my colleagues for their important contribution to the onerous task of analysing the recordings.

I took total responsibility for analysis of the first questionnaire and follow up interviews and am entirely responsible for all written material produced from the evidence.

The research could not have been undertaken alongside my teaching, administrative and other normal work commitments, without resources for data collection. In working with seconded community work practitioners employed by the agency being investigated, I was aware of a number of

potential dilemmas. To undertake the work involved it was essential to have workers familiar with the theory and context of community work practice. However, the very qualities necessary also held dangers in that the workers might have a tendency either to identify with respondents or allow their own values about community work to influence their objectivity as interviewers. To avoid them 'going native' it was necessary to give particular attention to preparation and training for their tasks, particularly through role playing and feedback.

A further difficulty to be overcome was the possibility that the workers might be known to the respondents. In a Region covering a population of 2½ million people this is not as likely as it might at first appear, however, care was taken to avoid any direct work between researchers and respondents known to them. In the selection of the seconded workers care was taken to avoid persons whose reputation might be likely to predispose respondents to particular kinds of responses.

Given that I too was an ex-employee of the Region's Social Work Department as a community work fieldwork teacher and regularly involved in public activity around the development of community work in the Region, the same problems arose in relation to myself as organiser and director of the research. (Indeed, they would probabaly have been even greater if I had directly undertaken data collection). To try to avoid any problems arising from this, every effort was made to ensure the confidentiality of all data and to emphasise that, though in part supported by the Region, the research project was an independent exercise promoted by me as a staff member of the Department of Social Administration & Social Work of Glasgow University.

Whilst these relationships were potentially problematic, they may also have been enabling in that many respondents knew personally who was responsible for the research and could make their own judgements about its honesty and objectivity.

## Methods

The methods adopted for the research required the selection of a sample which could ensure that representative data was collected and a variety of approaches to the collection of the data which would offer insight into the characteristics of the workers, the nature of their activities and their perceptions of the value of this work. All of this had to be approached in the light of the resources available to undertake the research. The unique feature of this research in the field of community work was the choice of a time-budget recording approach as a central method. Though it presents difficulties which are discussed below, it offered a method of discovering directly how workers spend their time rather than relying on their beliefs as to their pattern of activities which has been common to most other research in this field.

### (a) Sample selection

In identifying the target population for investigation, there was a basic difficulty in defining who should be identified as a community worker. Though the Social Work Department had sixty workers in posts designated Community Worker, they represented only half of the workers considered to be involved in community work. In addition there were thirty-eight unqualified workers employed as Community Work Assistants,

ten workers as Senior Community Workers and twelve as Community Development Organisers - effectively the senior line managers of community work. All of these workers operated within a generic job description of community work, however, there were a number of other categories of worker who were usually directly managed by community work staff. These included posts such as Welfare Rights Officers, Voluntary Service Coordinators, Street Warden Coordinators and Pre-school Community Organisers.

Whilst it would have been interesting to examine the activities of the total range of workers involved in community work, the scale of resources required and the complexity of methods of data collection and analysis if both specialist and generic workers were included, was considered too problematic. It was therefore decided that the research should concentrate on workers operating from a generic orientation to community work. This meant a sample of Community Development Organisers, Senior Community Workers, Community Workers and Community Work Assistants. The scale of resources available and the proposed methods for the study precluded working with all staff. Identifying an appropriate sample size was, however, problematic since it could not be assumed, due to the complex history of development of community work in the Region, that patterns of working would be comparable between the five administrative divisions into which the Social Work Department was organised. It was known, for example, that in Renfrew Division workers were operating from organisationally distinct units of Community Workers whereas in Glasgow Division they were as likely to be out-posted to Area Social Work Teams.

It was evident that a stratified sample by job designation was required but that it was also necessary to ensure proportional representation of staff from each of the Divisions of the Region. Accordingly, a stratified random sampling method was adopted for each Division. The sample was set at 50% of staff to maintain the overall scale of the population to be investigated at a manageable level whilst still ensuring that all appropriate designations of workers were represented in each Divisional sample. The sample was drawn from the Region's official employment list in November 1982. It consisted of nineteen Community Work Assistants, thirty Community Workers, five Senior Community Workers and six Community Development Organisers.

(b) Data collection methods

To obtain descriptive data about the workers themselves a questionnaire (Appendix 1) was designed to obtain information relating to: age, sex, length of employment, training and educational qualifications, previous forms of employment, related voluntary work experience, location and character of work place.

For the second element of data collection concerned with the actual activities of workers, the sample was asked to maintain a diary record of their activities in a prescribed form over a one month period of work. (See Appendix 2).

In respect of data concerning the values and attitudes of workers towards their activities, each worker was interviewed immediately after the period recorded using an interview schedule (see appendix 3).

These methods of data collection were pilotted in the Autumn of 1982 with the community work staff of the Crossroads Youth and Community

Association. Though employed by a voluntary organisation their work patterns were felt unlikely to differ very significantly from community workers employed by Strathclyde Region. These workers were interested in the research and prepared to give time not only to pilot the approach but also to actively criticise deficiencies that they might identify.

The initial questionnaire was relatively straightforward and produced few difficulties. Administered by the three seconded research assistants, with minor adjustments, it appeared to fulfil the requirements. The diary recordings were less easily managed however. From the outset a number of potential problems had been identified. In the preliminary papers for the project they were described in the following way:

> "Firstly, the recording of activity will necessarily be self administered but must produce readily comparable data from one respondent to the next. As far as is possible the prescribed recording schedule will have to produce uniformity of style and depth of description. Given that the purpose is to record what is really happening the procedure has to be sufficiently open to encapsulate the total range of possible activity at the same time as ensuring that work is described in comparable categories of activity. It is clear that to ensure this, close guidance will have to be given to respondents. However, it will be important not to impose an inappropriate typology of community work styles which might distort the description of the activity to fulfil the expectations of the typology. Depth of recording will be a further problem in ensuring comparability of data. Similarly, amount of time allocated to an activity is not necessarily a measure of its significance to the worker, the agency or the consumers of community work services.
>
> The most difficult problem, however, concerns the time period over which data should be collected. Too short a period may prove untypical of the overall activity of the worker, too long a period may make the task of recording too onerous or the scale of material collected unmanageable. The problem is not only connected to the length of time covered but also the period of the year.
>
> The total resolution of all of these dilemmas is not possible. The task is to achieve as workable a set of compromises as

> seems feasible. During discussions in preparation for this proposal it has been suggested that the original plan to record activities for each worker over just one week would be too short a period to ensure typicality. It has been suggested also that either a substantially longer period or a series of short periods separated by, say a month, would introduce an important longitudinal dimension to the study. Whilst sympathetic to the argument that these approaches would allow for consideration of the consistency of the patterns of work being undertaken, I am also aware that they require greater commitment on the part of respondents, and would produce material which would be more complex to follow up and analyse. The programme has to be manageable within the resources available but its findings have equally to avoid the possible criticism that the method of data collection is liable itself to distort the real character of practice. If a very short period was chosen respondents might select to organise that week to produce a particular impression of their work. This problem would equally apply to short recording periods spaced out over a longer period.
>
> Whilst drawn to the idea of a longitudinal study, my suspicion is that the change process of community work tend to be quite slow and that the research would have to be extended over a very long period (probably up to a couple of years) to produce useful comparative material relating to changes in practice over time. On the other hand, the dangers of distortion in a one week snapshot approach seem substantial. I am therefore proposing that the diary element of the study takes the form of a 'long exposure snapshot', each worker being asked to examine his work over a period of one month. To try to ensure that an untypical month is not chosen, the sample will be divided into three groups who will record their activities in separate months. These will be chosen to avoid periods where the pattern of work is distorted by seasonal characteristics."

The pilot study was only able to provide answers to some of the problems. In particular it assisted in identifying the kind and level of guidance which was most likely to assist effective recording whilst avoiding undue influence on its character. Following the pilot study, based on the content of recording produced from it, two guidance documents were prepared to assist the recordings. The first (see Appendix 2) set out the main areas of content likely to be included in recordings. These were identified as: attending formal meetings,

attending informal meetings and discussions, supervision meetings, correspondence, telephone calls, preparation of written material, planning activity, administration and other activities. In relation to each, workers were asked to identify who, where, when and what was involved specifically identifying their own roles. The second document (see appendix 4) which was a fictitious example of a typical day's recording formulated from the pilot study, was to offer further guidance on what and how to record. All respondents were asked to use a pro-forma laid out in the same fashion.

In the final analysis it was apparent that the nine categories identified were insufficiently subtle to differentiate all categories of activity, however, the general patterns established provided a generally high quality of recording in a directly comparable form.

The initial letter sent to sample members (see Appendix 5) and the briefing papers for recording identified the onerous nature of the recording. It had become apparent from the pilot study that respondents would have to be quite self-disciplined to meet the requirements of the research. Simple but important directions were given to respondents about ensuring the immediacy of recording. They were advised to record discrete activities as they occurred and certainly to ensure each recording was undertaken on the day in question. Pilot respondents had noted problems of unconscious selectivity and inaccurate memory if recording was not immediate. Since it was not physically possible to directly supervise all recording, it was decided that respondents would be required to post the recordings of each week to the researcher. This had two functions, first to ensure that recordings were being done and facilitate

identification of any respondents not making recordings who could then be followed up immediately. Secondly, it allowed the researchers to scrutinise the recordings immediately and seek any clarification whilst events were still reasonably fresh in respondents memories. This procedure could not guarantee that recordings were undertaken on the day of events, but did ensure that the maximum delay was a week. It is felt in retrospect that the close interest shown by the researchers in the progress of recording was highly influential in maintaining a good general quality of recording throughout the period of the research.

A further area in which the pilot study was reassuring concerned the honesty with which workers would record their activities or the degree to which they might alter their activities to reflect their expectations of what might be thought to be a desirable pattern of work. In relation to the latter it was noted that in a short period such changed activity patterns might be possible but that over a period as long as a month the dynamics of the established work processes and demands would exert too strong an influence for consistent distortion. In relation to the former, it is impossible to know whether, in fact, there was any dishonesty in the recording, however, the pilot respondents judged it very unlikely on the grounds that producing the recordings, though onerous enough in itself, would be far less difficult than trying to invent a false but consistent version of events!

The diary recordings were undertaken in the period February to May of 1983. The sample strata were randomly divided into three sub samples each recording a separate four week period, the first from early February to early March, the second early March to early April and the third, after a break to avoid the Easter holiday period, from late April

to late May. It was judged unlikely that any seasonal distortions would emerge in these periods and the evidence of the study supports this in that the overall patterns of work of each sub-sample proved to be very similar.

Moving to the third component of the data collection, all respondents were interviewed within three weeks of completing their recordings. As appendix 3 shows, the interviews followed a structured schedule designed to clarify the objectives of their practice as described in the diary recordings. The written introduction to the final interview went on to say:

> "Community work literature suggests that the objectives of community work are a product of complex relations between sponsors, managers, consumers and practitioners. We are therefore interested to discover both how you describe your own objectives and how you perceive the objectives of the other parties. Further, we hope to discover the degree to which you believe your work fulfils the objectives of the different parties to the process".

Scrutiny of the interview schedule will show the procedure used to maintain consistency in the interviews both in terms of the role of the interviewer and the patterns of recording open-ended questions.

The schedule sought first to examine workers objectives and attitudes to the other parties involved in community work without reference to their recording period. Second, it sought to identify the way in which workers related their answers in the first part of the interview to the pattern of work they had actually undertaken by identifying those aspects of their work most and least valued by themselves and the other parties. Finally, the interview sought to identify factors which workers believed most influenced the pattern of

their work and to identify the theoretical models of community work practice with which they most closely identified.

Most important evidence from the pilot study in this area concerned the uniformity of procedures for undertaking and recording the material. The interviewing was undertaken by the seconded research assistants following training sessions and was strictly supervised by the writer.

Approach to data analysis

Whilst the analysis of the initial questionnaire on the characteristics of the workers involved straightforward quantification, analysis of the workers recordings and responses to the final interviews was more complex.

The recordings facilitated three kinds of analysis: examination of the character of the activities undertaken; examination of the content of these activities to shed light on the purpose for which they were undertaken, and examination of the networks of people with whom the workers engaged in the process of the activities. The first and last were amenable to time-budget analysis, i.e. quantification of relative amounts of time allocated to different activities and contacts, whilst the content analysis was derived from a secondary examination of the activity time budget.

In the activity analysis a fundamental distinction was drawn between time spent in contact with other people and that which was not. In the latter category the component activities were identified as: preparation of written material; reading and collecting information; administration of resources (e.g. caretaking, setting up video equipment); office administration; planning workload; recording for

the research project itself; travel; administration for other groups and miscellaneous. In relation to the contact activities, the nine broad categories identified in the briefing to respondents were expanded to twenty. They were as follows:

1. Committee meetings of Regional or District Council.

2. Community Council meetings.

3. Meetings of non-statutory organisations for non-social purposes. (This category contains meetings of a diverse range of groups both within the community and between professional workers as well as groups combining community members and professional workers. All the groups are characterised by a task orientation, e.g. campaigning on a particular issue, newspaper production, and hold in common the fact that they are pre-planned, occur on a regular basis and deal with non-social issues. The balance of time allocation between these types of meetings is revealed both by the network and content analyses.)

4. Public meetings.

5. Union meetings.

6. Team/staff meetings - (these are meetings of a regular nature with other staff (community and/or social work) for the transaction of general organisational business.)

7. Being supervised.

8. Supervising staff.

9. Interviewing for staff.

10. Regular groups - social/recreational. (These are mainly community groups. Their primary concern is recreational activity.)

11. One-off organised events. (These are usually social/recreational activities organised on a specific occasion.)

12. Participation in activities with people other than social. (This refers to activities undertaken alongside others, usually community members, outside the framework of formal group meetings, e.g. working on accounts, collating newsletters.)

13. Being available at specified times. (This refers to occasions where workers make themselves available to others if required for a particular purpose, e.g. welfare rights advice.)

14. Home visits.

15. Conferences and Courses.

16. Other pre-planned contacts. (This category contains all activities not included elsewhere which are pre-arranged for agreed purposes. It refers to meeting with individuals or informal groups. Formal groups fall in category 3.)

17. Other non-planned contacts. (This category contains all unanticipated contacts not considered elsewhere, i.e. these are chance meetings most commonly with individuals.)

18. Phone calls.

19. Correspondence.

20. Community surveys.

The purpose of the content analysis was to further illuminate the recordings by exploring the purposes for which different activities were undertaken. To base this on perceptions of work purpose used by the respondents, the categories for this analysis were drawn directly from answers given by them in questions 5 - 8 in the final interviews. The content categories used were as follows:

1. Work with social work management.

2. Work with tenants associations.

3. Work with groups/organisations of unemployed people or work on issues of unemployment.

4. Work with forum/network of community groups.

5. General work with community groups.

6. Work with individual activists.

7. Work with other community development staff.

8. Information gathering and research work.

9. Work with womens' groups.

10. Work with housing campaigns.

11. Work with volunteer groups.

12. IT/Youth or childrens' work.

13. Community care and community service schemes.

14. Corporate working.

15. Resource work.

16. Provision of community premises, facilities or amenities.

17. Advice and information work.

18. Media work.

19. Work with community councils.

20. Work to encourage community, officials and elected members to work together.

21. Work to directly influence District or Regional departments.

22. Work with social work colleagues (other than managerial roles).

23. Trade union work.

24. Work with single parents.

25. Written work, report preparation and recording.

26. Community enterprise projects.

27. Community arts work.

28. Nuclear disarmament work.

29. Work with individuals and families.

30. Sitting in the street/being visible.

31. Work with community or residents associations.

32. Working as a district councillor.

33. Work with ethnic minorities.

34. Unplanned face-to-face work.

35. Being available to the community.

36. Working with the elderly.

37. Training.

38. Civic week/gala day.

39. Projects giving good publicity.

40. Discussion with councillors.

41. Work on alcohol/solvent abuse.

42. Unclear what is purpose/value.

43. Personal concerns of the worker.

44. Effective action and good results.

45. Administration and clerical work.

46. Civil liberties work.

47. Odd obligements.

48. Advocacy work.

49. Social activities within office.

Each activity was examined in terms of the contents listed. The aggregate scores produced were not measured in terms of time but in terms of the frequency with which particular contents were recorded under different activity headings. This is a less precise measure than the time-budget but, given that the same activities might focus on more than one content, time allocation between them was not possible.

In relation to the network analysis, each contact activity was examined to identify with whom the worker was in contact and a time budget for each form of contact produced. Three broad categories were identified: other professional workers; members of the community; politicians. The first two of these contained sub-divisions and in addition there were a series of combination categories. The categories were as follows:

1. Contact with other community work staff from your own agency (i.e. Strathclyde Regional Social Work Department) only.

2. Contact with Community Work and Social Work staff from your own agency only.

3. Contact with social work staff (other than community workers) only.

4. Contact with Community Education staff only.

5. Contact with other statutory community work staff only.

6. Contact with staff of one other statutory agency only.

7. Contact with staff of one other non-statutory agency only.

8. Contact with more than one statutory or non-statutory agency simultaneously.

9. Contact with community group only.

10. Contact with ordinary members of the community only.

11. Contact with community group and ordinary community members simultaneously.

12. Contact with politicians only.

13. Contact with politicians and community members (distinction between community group members and ordinary members of the community was dropped for the more complex composite contact categories. The combined category is referred to as community members).

14. Contact with other community workers and community members.

15. Contact with other community workers, social workers and community members.

16. Contact with social workers and community members.

17. Contact with community members and other agencies (statutory and non-statutory distinction not adopted for this catgegory).

18. Contact with politicians and other agencies (statutory/non statutory not distinguished).

19. Contact with service staff only.

20. Contact with other persons unspecified.

21. Contact with politicians, other agency/agencies and community members.

22. Contact with private/commercial agencies only.

23. Contact with paid workers of community groups only.

By producing a matrix for each worker in the sample it was possible not just to quantify the time spent by workers in contact with different people but also to identify the patterns in relation to each activity.

Whereas the purpose of the recordings was to discover what the workers actually spent their time doing, the follow up interviews sought to explore their perceptions of the value of this work and to appreciate their motivation for undertaking it. Analysis here, though seeking to quantify the attachment of workers to different values, was as much concerned with qualitative assessment. Particular attention was given to ensuring that categories used for assessment were derived from the workers own comments. More detail of the analysis procedure is given in Chapters 7 - 10 which discuss the data derived from the follow-up interviews.

Material in the chapters which follow will draw on these sources of information.

# PART III

## The Workers and their activities

# Chapter 4

## Who Are the Workers?

Public stereotypes of community workers often seem to present them as young, radical, male, bearded, sociologists, operating in a free ranging, slightly subversive and ill disciplined occupation of questionable value. In that this research project sought to clarify who the community workers are, how they spend their time and why, it is hoped that a more objective and informed impression may emerge. This chapter concentrates on material obtained from the first questionnaire (see Appendix 1) which sought to establish basic characteristics of the workers in the Strathclyde Social Work Department.

The research sought to discover the age and sex of the workers, their academic and professional qualifications, their previous work experience both in community work and in other occupations, the nature and extent of their voluntary activities related to community work prior to entering the occupation and their length of employment in their current posts.

Though important in itself to know who the community workers are, it is interesting too in terms of considering the formative influences which may have been at play in their personal and collective routes to entry of community work. For example, it may be argued that the public stereotype of community workers suggested above is also a reflection of the characteristics associated in the public mind with the radical youth culture of the late sixties and early seventies, and, as the material in the first chapter suggests, this was undoubtedly a significant influence

in the emergence of community work. However, the later emergence of community work in Strathclyde region may not associate it with a generation of workers as influenced by this period. The age of the workers nonetheless is likely to influence their outlook as is their educational experience. If education is accepted as influencial in social class terms, the evidence may also shed some light on potential differences in the outlook of workers based on educational attainment. The degree of homogeneity of experience of workers and a clustering of workers in a limited age range is also likely to influence the ways in which they relate to one another irrespective of status differences in their job designations. With these thoughts in mind the results will be explored.

From the sample of sixty workers a response rate of 92.8% was received to these questions. As in the presentation of other data material will be presented relating to the sample as a whole and each designation of worker.

Age and Sex

In relation to these two factors the Frances et al research[1] provides comparative figures on a national basis also relating to 1983. The pattern of results is remarkably similar to those which would have been predicted from their study.

Taking the sex ratio in community work nationally they indicate 53% men to 47% women but for Scotland 61% to 39%. These latter figures correspond precisely to those found for workers in Strathclyde Social Work Department. Table 4.1 below provides the breakdown by sample strata. The interpretation of these figures is of course open to

debate but in terms of equal opportunities women, as in Scotland as a whole, appear to be disadvantaged overall. Perhaps more significant, however, is the absence of women from the most senior community work posts. As figures which follow will show, this cannnot be explained either by the age structure or qualification levels of men relative to women.

In relation to age the youthful stereotype emerges as reasonably accurate. Though there are a few older workers, the Table 4.2 below demonstrates broad comparability with the Francis et al figures indicating 35% of workers under 30 and 59% under 35.

The age structure of the sample is most interesting in the similarity of the figures in relation to all categories of work irrespective of seniority in the organisational hierarchy and irrespective of sex.

There can be little doubt that such an undifferentiated and youthful age structure will influence both the kinds of relationships which exist between the four strata of the sample and between community workers as a whole and the rest of the social work department. This is probable since such an age structure implies more limited differences in length of experience than might be normal in a managerial hierarchy in equivalent professional groupings such as social work or teaching. This hypothesis is generally supported by the evidence described in later sections. Equivalent figures for social work were provided in evidence from the Association of Directors of Social Services to the Barclay[2] enquiry into social work. They indicated that in 1982 65% of workers were between 25 and 45, only 3% were under 25 and 23% 30 years or under. 73% had been in post for more than two years and 30% more than five.

Table 4.1 Sex ratio by sample strata - percentage figures in brackets

| | Male | Female | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| Community Worker | 17(62.9) | 10 (37) | 27 |
| Community Development Officer | 6(100) | - (0) | 6 |
| Senior Community Worker | 3( 60) | 2 (40) | 5 |
| Community Work Assistant | 8( 44) | 10 (66) | 18 |
| Total | 34(60.7) | 22 (39.3) | 56 |

Table 4.2 Mean age by sample strata

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Community Worker | 31.9 | 28.8 | 30.8 |
| Community Development Officer | 33.5 | - | 33.5 |
| Senior Community Worker | 34.3 | 32.5 | 33.6 |
| Community Work Assistant | 32.6 | 33.7 | 33.1 |
| All | 32.5 | 29.3 | 32.1 |

This demonstrates significant differences between community work and its host organisation.

Qualifications

The material on qualifications explored both academic and professional qualification. Table 4.3 indicates numbers of workers in each category with qualifications at different levels. The qualifications considered were 'O' Levels, Highers, 'A' levels, first degrees and other higher education qualifications. Though included in the questionnaire no one had any qualification at higher degree level.

The figures for academic qualifications reflect the anticipated difference between Community Work Assistants and the other three categories of worker. Only one of these workers has a higher education qualification, an HNC, and this worker is currently in part time professional community work training. 44% of the Community Work Assistants have no academic qualification as defined above. These figures reflect the intentions of employing people as Community Work Assistants whose qualification is seen as based primarily on practical experience and on local involvement with their own community. Later in the study, it will be shown that Community Work Assistants hold markedly less radical aspirations for their work. If reference group theory is accepted as indicating that educational experience is likely to influence expectations of achievement and change, it may be argued that these differences may at least in part be associated with their more limited educational achievements. Since most of these workers were also employed from within the neighbourhoods designated by the Regional Council as particularly socially disadvantaged, it is also likely that

Table 4.3 Academic qualifications by sample strata

| | 'O' LEVELS | | | HIGHERS | | | 'A' LEVELS | | | DEGREES | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 3 or less | 4 or 5 | 6 or more | 2 or less | 3 or 4 | 5 or more | 1 | 2 | 3 | Soc. Sci. | Other | Other Higher Ed. Qual. | No Acad. Qual. |
| Community Worker | 1 | 7 | 18 | 3 | 8 | 8 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 6 | 4 | 1 | 0 |
| Community Development Officer | 1 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Senior Community Worker | 1 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Community Work Assistant | 5 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 8 |
| Total | 8 | 13 | 25 | 7 | 17 | 10 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 11 | 5 | 3 | 8 |

this environment may have produced lower expectations than appear to hold for more educated workers, who, even if brought up in such areas, have been drawn away from them by the very process of their own attainment.

Five out of six of the Community Development Organisers have degrees, three of these obtained from the Open University, whilst 37% of the Community Workers have degrees. One of the five Community Development Organisers also holds an Ordinary National Certificate.

Table 4.4 indicates the number of workers holding professional qualifications recognised by Strathclyde Region for employment in community work posts. These are the Certificate of Qualification in Social Work, a Diploma or Certificate in Youth and Community Work or Community Education (these are grouped as one qualification) a Diploma in Community Development or a Diploma in Adult Education. The lengths of courses are indicated.

These overall percentages for workers with different qualifications compare with national figures in social service departments given by Francis[3] et al of: 28% CQSW, 27% Cert. in Youth and Community work, 6% other community work, 4% other relevant qualification and 36% with no qualification or no relevant qualification. Clearly the most significant difference lies in the ratio of social work as against youth and community work qualified staff. The results of this research are broadly comparable with Scottish Education Department[4] figures for Scotland as a whole which showed 19.4% holding the CQSW 34.3% youth and community qualifications in 1985.

The relatively lower number of degree level qualifications may be influential in terms of the attitudes that the workers have to practice.

Table 4.4 Professional qualifications by sample strata - percentages in brackets

| | CQSW | | | Dip/Cert Y.& C. or Comm. Educ. | | | Dip. in Comm. Dev. | Dip. Adv. Educ. | No Professional Qualification |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1 yr. | 2 yr. | 3 yr. | 1 yr. | 2 yr. | 3 yr. | | | |
| Community Worker | 3 | 3 | 1 | 10 | 4 | 4 | 2 | | 1 |
| Community Development Officer | 1 | | 1 | | 4 | | | 1 | |
| Senior Community Worker | 1 | 1 | | | 2 | | | | 1 |
| Community Work Assistant | | | | | | | | | 18 |
| Total | 11 (19.6%) | | | 24 (42.9%) | | | 2(3.6%) | 1(1.3%) | 20 (35.7%) |

N.B. 1 Community Worker holds both CQSW and Youth & Community Diploma.
1 Community Development Officer holds both Youth & Community Diploma and Diploma in Adult Education.

Among Community Development Organisers the prevalence of Open University qualifications indicates that these were achieved on a part-time basis whilst working and suggests that they may have been less exposed to the cultural influences of full time higher education. Among the other workers, excluding Community Work Assistants, professional qualifications are almost universal and appear to have been attained in full-time training courses. Thus most workers have an experience of higher education but this is generally oriented to vocational rather than primarily academic purposes. It may be argued that this is likely to produce a more functional orientation to practice than might arise if workers had been more exposed to primarily conceptual study of their society. Though basic social scientific study is a requirement of professional training courses in both youth and community work and social work, less than 20% of workers had had opportunity for degree level study in this area. Later in the study it will be suggested that one of the characteristics of this group of workers is a lack of attention to systematic analysis of social need. Whether this can be explained by the limited academic achievements is open to question but it is a possibility that should not be ignored. In my own view there is an anti-intellectualism within community work. While I sympathise with the view that practicality rather than intellectual abstraction is required, it may be that the former actually suffers by the absence of analytical skills and clarity within the occupation.

Some people may regard this as an elitist position which runs counter to the desire in community work to offer access to qualification for a wide range of workers who have not achieved in traditional academic terms but have shown themselves to be effective activists or

voluntary workers in their own communities. I am not arguing that this process should not be promoted but that if community work is to realise some of its aspirations for influence on broader social trends and policies it requires an intellectual rigour within its ranks which the qualification levels achieved here, and the swelling of its ranks with academically less able entrants at the expense of the academically more gifted, are unlikely to achieve. This may be regarded as reactionary but I would suggest that community work is in danger of becoming trapped by its misconceived ideals. In this group of workers no-one held a higher degree which may be taken as evidence that community work is not attracting the most able entrants yet the complexity of the questions and problems it aspires to address demand ability. In Etzioni's[5] terms community work along with occupations like nursing or social work should be regarded on the basis of this evidence as a 'semi-profession'. I am not arguing that it should seek professional status simply by extending its qualification requirements (it is doubtful in any case that there is a sufficiently clear body of knowledge for community work to do so at present) but that it must be more aware of the need to attract into its ranks workers capable of undertaking the critical examination of its functions and methods which will enable it to become more effective. Its credibility may depend on it. What should be avoided in this approach is the creation of an elite cadre of workers whose position might reflect the exclusiveness and hegemony more characteristic of the traditional professions like the law or medicine.

Before moving from the discussion of qualifications it is worth noting that there was no significant correlation between types of qualification and either age or sex.

Employment patterns

Three main aspects of employment were examined: the period of employment in current post; nature and length of previous community work employment; nature of other previous work experiences.

Overall (Table 4.5) 66% had been in post for two years or less. The figure for Community Work Assistants was 89% and Community Workers 63%. Community Development Organisers had been noticeably longer in post than other workers. The mean average for them was 4.33 years compared with 2.12 for Community Workers, 2.25 for Senior Community Workers and 1.3 for Community Work Assistants. The mean average for the total sample is 1.98 years. These overall figures closely compare with Francis[6] et al who indicates 66% of their sample entering post within three years of the study.

Given the time scales presumed to be necessary for community development activity these figures indicate rather short periods of employment though this was undoubtedly affected by the recent creation of many posts particularly for Community Work Assistants.

Turning to previous community work employment, the figures all relate to employment in community work prior to taking up current posts. Community work posts are defined as those requiring the application of community work methods, thus Youth and Community posts are included, Youth Work posts excluded.

Table 4.6 indicates the number of previous community work posts occupied. While it is to be expected that Community Work Assistants will not have had previous community work experience the most surprising finding is that one Community Development Organiser and one Senior Community Worker entered their posts without previous community work

Table 4.5 Length of employment in current posts - by sample strata

| | Length of employment | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1 or less | 2 or less | 3 or less | 4 or less | More than 4 |
| Community Worker | 8 | 9 | 5 | 3 | 2 |
| Community Development Officer | - | 1 | - | 3 | 2 |
| Senior Community Worker | 1 | 2 | - | 2 | - |
| Community Work Assistant | 8 | 8 | 2 | - | - |
| Total | 17 | 20 | 7 | 8 | 4 |
| % | 30.4 | 35.7 | 12.5 | 14.3 | 7.1 |

Table 4.6 Number of previous community work posts - by sample strata

| | Number of Posts | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Community Worker | 11 | 9 | 2 | 4 | 1 |
| Community Development Officer | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 | - |
| Senior Community Worker | 1 | 2 | - | 1 | 1 |
| Community Work Assistant | 15 | 3 | - | - | - |
| Total | 28 | 16 | 3 | 7 | 2 |
| % | 50 | 28.6 | 5.4 | 12.5 | 3.6 |

experience and two Community Development Organisers with experience of only one other post.

Table 4.7 indicates the average length of time in previous community work posts for workers with previous community work experience. The most significant aspect of these results is the limited period that most workers had spent in each of their previous community work posts. Over 70% of those who had held previous posts in community work occupied them for two years or less. No Community Development Organiser in the sample had occupied community work posts for an average of more than two years.

Table 4.8 indicates the total period of employment in community work prior to taking up current posts for those in previous community work employment. These figures indicate that not only have the periods of occupation of particular posts been generally short but that those with previous community work employment did not have substantial experience prior to entering their current posts. Adding in the figures for those without previous community work employment this indicates that 66% of Community Workers, 50% of Community Development Organisers , 40% of Senior Community Workers and 89% of Community Work Assistants had two years or less community work experience prior to their present posts.

Table 4.9 indicates the character of the previous community work posts held. The figures relate to the total number of posts occupied. It is worth noting that only a small percentage of the posts appear to have been short term Manpower Services Commission sponsored projects. This does not therefore provide an explanation for the short duration of occupation of posts.

Table 4.7 Length of time per previous community work post - by sample strata

| | Length of time per post (years) | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1 or less | 2 or less | 3 or less | 4 or less | More than 4 |
| Community Worker | 4 | 7 | 3 | 1 | 1 |
| Community Development Officer | - | 5 | - | - | - |
| Senior Community Worker | 1 | 1 | - | 1 | 1 |
| Community Work Assistant | 2 | - | 1 | - | - |
| Total | 7 | 13 | 4 | 2 | 2 |
| % | 25 | 46.4 | 14.3 | 7.1 | 7.1 |
| | | 72.4 | | 28.6 | |

Table 4.8 Total length of community work employtment - by sample strata

| | Length of community work employment (years) | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1 or less | 2 or less | 3 or less | 4 or less | More than 4 |
| Community Worker | 4 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 4 |
| Community Development Organiser | | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Senior Community Worker | 1 | | | | 3 |
| Community Work Assistant | 1 | | 2 | | |
| Total | 6 | 6 | 6 | 3 | 8 |
| % | 21.4 | 21.4 | 17.9 | 10.7 | 26.6 |

Table 4.9 Character of previous community work posts - by sample strata

| | Social Work | Youth & Community/ Comm. Educ. | Vol. Org. | S.T.E.P./ Y.O.P. | Other | Unspecified |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Community Worker | 5 | 5 | 3 | 3 | 7 | 6 |
| Community Development Organiser | 3 | 3 | 1 | - | - | 3 |
| Senior Community Worker | 4 | - | 2 | - | - | 3 |
| Community Work Assistant | - | - | 1 | 1 | 1 | - |
| Total | 13 | 8 | 7 | 4 | 8 | 12 |
| % | 25 | 15.4 | 13.5 | 7.7 | 15.4 | 23.1 |

Though social work is the most common previous setting it is perhaps surprising that it only accounts for 25% of previous posts.

The 'other' category is mainly made up of overseas and church sponsored posts.

Before leaving the discussion of the community work experience of the sample it is worth noting that as might be anticipated, there is a positive correlation between age and both length of time in current post and the number of previous community work posts held, though the differences are not very great. Table 4.10 presents figures for the sample divided at the mean age of 32 years.

Turning to the nature of previous employment other than community work, in analysis of this data a broad distinction has been drawn between employment in activities which have been defined as related to community work and those which have no direct connection. Table 4:11 indicates the number of workers previously employed in related activity to community work. The headings are self explanatory except the other category which includes one church and one overseas development post.

The figures in Table 4.11 require acknowledgement of the fact that five Community Workers, one Community Development Organiser and one Senior Community Worker occupied posts in two other relevant occupations. Taking this into account, the percentages of each category of worker previously employed in at least one related occupation are as follows: Community Workers 59%; Community Development Organisers 33%; Senior Community Workers 60% and Community Work Assistants 22%. The overall percentage is 44.6%

The high percentage of Community Workers and Senior Community Workers with previous related experience is interesting, particularly as

Table 4.10 Time in current post and number of previous community work posts by age

| | Time in current post (months) | | Number of previous community work posts | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 31 yrs. & less | 32 yrs. & more | 31 yrs. & less | 32 yrs. & more |
| Community Work Assistant | 13 | 22 | 0.75 | 1.75 |
| Community Worker | 23.6 | 37.1 | 0.1 | 0.3 |
| Senior Community Worker | - | 27 | - | 1.8 |
| Community Development Organiser | 47 | 54.5 | 1.05 | 1.75 |

Table 4.11 Nature of previous employment experience related to community work - by sample strata

| | S. Work/ Probation | | Teaching | | Youth Work | | | Plan- ning | Nursery Nursing | Other |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Qual. | Unqual. | Prim. | Second. | F.E. | Qual. | Unqual. | | | |
| Community Worker | 2 | 9 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 1 | | | 1 |
| Community Development Organiser | 1 | 1 | | | | | | | | 1 |
| Senior Community Worker | 1 | 1 | | | 1 | | | 1 | | |
| Community Work Assistant | | 2 | | | | | | | 2 | |
| Total | 4 | 13 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 |

it may influence disposition towards collaborative practice with other disciplines. Interestingly, though, Table 4.9 indicated only 25% of previous community work activity was in social work settings, the figure for previous related activity in social work is much higher representing 53% of those with previous related experience.

In terms of previous related employment requiring professional qualification, teaching posts are most significant followed by social work.

Table 4.12 indicates total length of employment in related occupations by category of worker. These figures again indicate generally short periods of employment, overall 56% being in other occupations for two years or less. This figure rises to 66% for the Community Worker Group. The Community Development Organisers and Senior Community Worker groups indicate generally longer periods of employment in other related occupations.

Analysis by category of related previous employment does not reveal any notable variation from one occupation to another.

Table 4.13 examines length of employment in non-related areas to community work. In all thirty-six respondents had worked in another non-related occupation. Broken down in percentages by category of worker the figures were as follows: Community Workers 44%; Community Development Organisers 66%; Senior Community Workers 80%; Community Work Assistants 89%

The striking feature of these figures is the relatively longer periods of employment in non related than community work related posts for all categories of worker. The feature is most noticeable for Community Work Assistants.

Table 4.12 Length of previous employment in related activities - by sample strata

| | 1 Year or less | 2 Years or less | 3 Years or less | More than 3 Years |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Community Worker | 9 | 5 | 3 | 4 |
| Community Development Organiser | 1 | | 1 | 1 |
| Senior Community Worker | | | 3 | 1 |
| Community Work Assistant | 1 | 2 | | 1 |
| | 56% | | 44% | |

Table 4.13 Total length of employment in non related occupations - by sample strata

| | 1 Year or less | 2 Years or less | 3 Years or less | 4 Years or less | More than 4 Years |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Community Worker | 3 | 1 | 2 | | 6 |
| Community Development Organiser | | | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Senior Community Worker | 2 | | | 1 | 1 |
| Community Work Assistant | 1 | | 1 | 3 | 11 |
| Total | 6 | 1 | 4 | 5 | 20 |
| | 19% | | 81% | | |

Overall the findings in relation both to community work and other previous employment reinforce the picture, which has already emerged from the age distribution of the sample, of a young occupation not simply in terms of the age of its members but equally in terms of the typical lengths of time that workers have been involved in it. This should be taken into account when evaluating the outcomes of practice. At the time of the research a sizeable majority of the workers had less than two years in their current post and an even larger proportion less than two years in previous community work employment. In addition, less than half had been employed in an occupation which might be regarded as developing skills at least some of which might be appropriate to community work practice.

All of this suggests that it would be unreasonable, in an activity where the time scales for change may be several years, to judge limited outcomes too harshly. However, the evidence also suggests that there may be a problem of leadership and direction in an occupational group where those in the more senior posts have been elevated to that position very quickly relative to patterns in comparable professions and without the opportunity to demonstrate sustained competance or develop their skills in relation to a wide range of problem areas or categories of disadvantage. Not only is this limited opportunity likely to handicap these workers in the execution of their roles but so too it is likely to produce a sceptical view on the part of lower status workers of the legitimacy of the authority of their line managers. This is a problematic situation in which more senior workers may lack confidence in their relationships with other workers either leading to retreat into bureaucratic authority in the absence of professional authority, or

denial that their role involves an expectation of leadership by workers or employers. In turn, other workers may be more prone to exploit the situation regarding themselves as less accountable, or they may find themselves adrift in the absence of direction from above. This problem is no doubt exacerbated by the fact that there is little difference in age between all four categories of staff. Though Community Development Organisers do appear to be better qualified it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that their elevation may have been as much to do with their slightly lengthier experience at the time when these posts were created as it was to do with exceptional ability, for in community work terms this would be difficult to measure in the short periods that most of them occupied other community work posts.

The creation of a hierarchical structure from within a group who are only marginally different in terms of experience and qualification, in the long term, may prove even more problematic, though it may be a problem which is difficult to avoid in establishing a management structure in an emergent occupation. As time passes those in lower positions gain substantially more direct practice experience than those who manage them and the credibility of the latter may become increasingly difficult to sustain. In addition the creation of such a structure in a youthful occupation tends to mean that normal patterns of career mobility are distorted. Those in lower status posts become frustrated by lack of opportunity for upward mobility as those in the more senior posts have been promoted at such an early stage in their own careers. Operating in a host department where few community work staff hold the normal professional qualification for promotion within its managerial hierarchy the problem may become even more intractable. It

is fortunate therefore that Strathclyde Social Work Department is not committed to the British Association of Social Workers view that only those with social work qualifications should be employed in managerial posts. However, as later evidence will show, the antipathy of many workers, including Community Development Organiser towards their employing department, may present problems. These workers may go through their careers without ever having had a sustained experience of direct community work or for that matter, other fieldwork typical of a social work department. This may be a questionable basis for future development.

Voluntary Experience prior to Qualification or Employment in Full-Time Community Work

The initial questionnaire explored the nature and length of voluntary experience relevant to community work. The range and character of the work undertaken by the sample is broad and complex. Whilst voluntary experience might be seen as an adjunct to or compensation for training or its absence, it is also felt to be of interest in indicating how far professional community work employment is an opportunity to extend previous interests.

It is very difficult to establish a precise measure of commitment to voluntary activity. Tables are presented indicating both length of period over which individuals have been active and numbers of hours per week during their most active year of involvement. Table 4.14 reveals both the relatively longer periods of involvement of Community Work Assistants in voluntary activity compared with other groups and the higher proportion engaging in some form of voluntary activity prior to

Table 4.14 Length of involvement in voluntary work in years at more than an average 2 hours per week by sample strata

| | 1 or less | 2 or less | 3 or less | 4 or less | 5 or less | More than 5 | No Vol. Activity |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Community Worker | 2 | 4 | 2 | 4 | 1 | 5 | 9 |
| Community Development Organiser | | 1 | | | 1 | | 4 |
| Senior Community Worker | | 1 | 1 | | | 1 | 2 |
| Community Work Assistant | | 1 | 6 | 1 | | 8 | |
| Total | 2 | 7 | 9 | 5 | 2 | 14 | 15 |

qualification or employment in community work. Overall, 66% of Community Workers, 33% of Community Development Organisers, 60% of Senior Community Workers and 89% of Community Work Assistants had undertaken some voluntary work at more than 2 hours per week. Taking the figures for work over periods of more than 5 years, 18% of Community Workers, no Community Development Organisers, 20% of Senior Community Workers and 44% of Community Work Assistants claimed this substantial period. These figures are usefully compared with the result presented in Table 4.15 indicating the number of hours voluntary work per week during the year of most active involvement.

Calculating these figures is difficult and may be subject to marginal inaccuracy due to the researcher's interpretation of respondents' reportage.

Where respondents reported length of involvement as an afternoon or evening this has been taken to mean three hours work. Where respondents reported full-time involvement this has been taken to mean thirty-six hours per week. Where involvement is intensive but for a short period this has been averaged out over a year, thus a six week full-time involvement in a playscheme is averaged out at 4.2 hours per week.

Despite the possible errors, the general pattern is clear enough. The most intensive levels of voluntary activity are reported by Community Work Assistants. Thus they tend to have operated over the longest periods and at greatest intensity. By both accounts, the Community Development Organiser group appears least active in voluntary work. Taking the groups individually the percentages with over twelve hours per week in their most active year of involvement are: Community

Table 4.15 Number of hours voluntary work per week in most active year of involvement by sample strata

| | No Vol. Act. or less than 1 yr. involvement | 3 hrs or less | 6 hrs or less | 9 hrs or less | 12 hrs or less | More than 12 hrs | DK |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Community Worker | 11 | | 4 | 3 | 1 | 6 | 2 |
| Community Development Organiser | 4 | | 2 | | | | |
| Senior Community Worker | 2 | 1 | | | | | |
| Community Work Assistant | 2 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 8 | |
| Total | 19 | 4 | 9 | 4 | 3 | 14 | 2 |

Workers 22%, Community Development Organisers 0%, Senior Community Workers 40% and Community Work Assistants 44%.

As already noted the range of voluntary activities reported is very wide. Table 4.16 indicates types of activity by category of worker. The figures are for separate recorded activities (i.e. a worker may be involved in several).

Table 4.17 presents the percentages of each category of worker with voluntary involvement in the three most common categories of activity.The heavy focus on children and youth is particularly interesting. The professionally qualified groups tending more to youth work but the Community Work Assistants to children's work. Though work with tenants, residents and community associations is the third most common category it is perhaps relatively small considering the emphasis in employed community work in the Social Work Department on these kinds of groups.

Before leaving the discussion of voluntary activity it may be worth noting that the political party and trade union categories may be contentious in that they may not be acknowledged as areas of voluntary work and hence may not have been reported by some respondents.

Relating the findings on voluntary work activities to themes taken up in relation to other aspects of the evidence in this chapter, the limited involvement of Community Development Organisers is particularly deserving of comment. It has been suggested that community work as an occupation places high value on practical experience. Indeed, this is the chief criteria used in the employment of unqualified workers. Also, it has been suggested that the short length of experience of community work among Community Development Organisers prior to their

Table 4.16 Types of voluntary activity by sample strata

| Type of Activity | Community Worker | Community Development Organiser | Senior Community Worker | Community Work Assistant | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Handicap | 2 | | 1 | 2 | 5 |
| Community Council | | | | 4 | 4 |
| Political Party | 2 | 1 | | 3 | 6 |
| Trade Union | 1 | | | 1 | 2 |
| Claimants' Union | | | | 2 | 2 |
| Youth Work | 15 | 2 | 3 | 6 | 26 |
| Playschemes/ Children | 6 | | | 10 | 16 |
| Children's Panel | | | | 1 | 1 |
| Elderly | 1 | | | 1 | 2 |
| Race Relations | 1 | | 1 | 2 | 4 |
| Community/Tenants Residents Assocs. | 2 | | 1 | 7 | 10 |
| Women's Groups | 2 | | | 1 | 3 |
| Overseas | 1 | | | | 1 |
| CAB/Advice Work | 2 | | | 2 | 4 |
| Homeless | 1 | | | | 1 |
| Unemployed | | | | 1 | 1 |
| Other/Unclear | 7 | 1 | 2 | 4 | 14 |
| Total | 43 | 4 | 2 | 47 | 102 |

Table 4.17 Most common categories of voluntary activity by sample strata

| | Category of activity ( as percentages of all activities) | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Youth | Children | T.A./Resid./Comm. Assoc. | Total |
| Community Worker | 34.9 | 13.9 | 4.6 | 53.5 |
| Community Development Organiser | 50 | | | 50 |
| Senior Community Worker | 37 | | 12.5 | 49.5 |
| Community Work Assistant | 12.7 | 27.2 | 14.9 | 48.9 |
| Total | 25.5 | 15.7 | 9.8 | 51 |

promotion may be problematic in managerial and supervisory terms for other community work staff. It might have been a useful asset therefore if Community Development Organisers could demonstrate that their practice experience is extended beyond their community work employment experience by substantial periods of voluntary work. However, this is not the case.

Summary

In a sample consisting of twenty seven Community Workers, eighteen Community Work Assistants, five Senior Community Workers and six Community Development Organisers, men outnumber women three to two. There is an inverse relationship between gender and seniority in that women are not represented at all in the most senior group of workers but outnumber men in the most junior.

The age distribution of the sample is remarkable in its lack of correlation with seniority and in its indication of the youthfulness of the workers. The mean average age is 32.1 years; for Community Development Organisers 33.5; Senior Community Workers 33.6; Community Workers 30.8 and Community Work Assistants 33.1. This is congruent with national patterns.

Material on employment produces some very interesting findings. Overall 66% had been in their current posts for less than two years. Community Development Organisers had generally been longer in post (4.33 years on average) but, given their average age, it will be apparent that they entered these posts relatively early in their careers and, the findings on previous work experience suggest, without very substantial community work experience. Only one had more than four years

experience of community work prior to entering a Community Development Organiser post. One had not held a community work post previously. Overall 50% of the sample had not held community work posts. Seniors were the most experienced group on entering their current posts. Of workers with previous community work experience, only 25% (though still the single largest agency setting) had been employed in a social work agency in this role. However, turning to previous employment in related activities, overall 53% had been employed in social work agencies. Taking social work/probation, teaching, youth work and planning as the primary related occupations, whilst 59% and 50% of Community Workers and Senior Community Workers had previous experience, only 33% of Community Development Organisers and 22% of Community Work Assistants were in this position. Interestingly, over 80% of the sample had spent three or more years in an occupation unrelated to community work.

In terms of academic qualifications, as would be anticipated, the Community Work Assistants are the least qualified group. Community Development Organisers are generally better qualified academically than their colleagues - 5 of 6 holding degrees compared with 37% of their Community Worker colleagues. In relation to professional qualifications it is worthy of note that only 29% of the qualified workers hold social work qualifications, compared with 63% with community education or youth and community qualifications. Community Development Organisers and Senior Community Workers have been qualified for noticeably longer periods than their community worker colleagues. Though Community Work Assistants lack academic or professional qualifications, their credentials in terms of previous voluntary work

experience are superior to those of their colleagues, both in relation to length and intensity of the activity prior to employment in community work. Community Development Organisers had the most limited experience of voluntary work on both counts. For all groups the most common forms of voluntary work have been with children and young people and are service rather than campaigning in orientation.

If we were to attempt to construct a portrait of the typical worker in each of the categories in the research, the Community Development Organiser would be male in his early thirties and the holder of a social science degree and a professional qualification in youth and community work. He would have been likely to have worked for a short period in an occupation unrelated to community work, to have had at least one other community work post but for less than two years prior to entering his present post which he would have occupied for about four years. He would have had little or no voluntary work experience. The typical Senior Community Worker would also be male in his early thirities. He would be professionally qualified in youth and community work or social work but would not hold a degree. He would have had at least one previous community work post and occupied it for substantially longer than the Community Development Organiser. He would have held his current post for about two years. He would be likely to have been employed in a related occupation before entering community work for more than three years. He would have had limited involvement in voluntary work for about three years. The typical Community Worker is again male and about thirty years of age. He is unlikely to hold a degree, though he will be professionally qualified most probably in youth and community work. He would be less likely than the previous two categories to have

worked in a non-related occupation but would probably have worked for a couple of years in a related occupation most probably in an unqualified capacity in social work. He would have held one previous community work post but for a period of less than two years and would have occupied his present post for less than two years. His voluntary work experience would be both more extensive and substantial than for the previous two groups of workers.

The typical Community Work Assistant, by contrast with the other groups of workers, would be female, though again in her early thirties. She would have three or four 'O' levels and possibly one higher. She would have no higher education and hence no professional qualification. She would have worked for more than four years in an occupation unrelated to community work but have had an extensive and substantial degree of voluntary work most probably relating to children in her own neighbourhood. She would not have held a community work post before and have occupied her present post for less than two years.

In the light of these pen portraits it may be argued that at least in terms of age, sex, to some degree qualification and the proposition that the occupation may be ill disciplined, the public stereotype suggested at the beginning of the chapter may not be entirely unreasonable.

References

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2. The Barclay Report, 'Social Workers - their role and tasks', National Institute for Social Work/Bedford Square Press, 1982.

3. Francis, D. et al, Op. Cit.

4. Scottish Education Department, 'Statistical Bulletin' 1985.

5. Etzioni, A., 'The semi-professions and their organisation - teachers, nurses, social workers', Free Press, 1969.

6. Francis, D., et al, Op. Cit.

# Chapter 5

## What do community workers do?

Just as there may be popular myths about what sorts of people community workers are, so too there will be associated ideas about what such people spend their time doing. It is my own hypothesis that community workers themselves are as prone to fantasy about the nature of their occupation as external observers. Particularly in relation to campaigning work involving direct forms of political action there seems to be a tendency to glamorise the nature of the work. This is a bit like imagining that the work of trade union officials is accurately described by those aspects of their activities which are reflected in media coverage of industrial disputes. Clearly. away from the publicity, much of the work is mundane and routine. However, it is most probably the quality of the unglamorous and less visible activities which is crucial in community work as in other activities. Readers expecting a discussion of what community workers do to reveal a perpetually exciting pattern of work will be disappointed. However, those interested in the cluster of skills which community workers need to employ in their activities in order to fulfil the range of their functions should find this profile of considerable interest. How much time for example do community workers spend working directly with other people? How much time is spent in formal meetings of community organisations or professional groups compared with the time spent working in informal ways with individuals? To which problem areas is most time given:

housing, unemployment, women's issues, children and young people, provision of community premises and amenities, the elderly or others? Do workers operate in a planned or reactive manner? Is their work focussed on campaigning activities or directed towards the development of local services in the community? In particular, does seniority increase the degree to which work focusses on the needs of the employment organisation relative to the needs of the community which it serves?

It is important in examining the evidence presented here to recognise that it provides a picture of what a group of commumnity workers was doing in a given month rather than an impression of the tasks involved in the overall execution of a community work intervention. The workers were at different stages of work not only in terms of the length of time that they had been in post but also in terms of the different pieces of work which each of them was undertaking within their overall workload. It has not been possible therefore to explore the findings in terms of the skills which may be required at different stages in a piece of work. On the other hand, it is reasonable to assume that in a sample of fifty six workers there is likely at any one time to be work at all stages of development. An exploration of the distribution of time between different sorts of activity and their content is indicative of the skills required for community work. It should be borne in mind, however, that the extensiveness of a particular sort of activity is not necessarily a measure of its significance for the overall process of intervention. For exmaple, a key public meeting may crucially affect the success of a piece of work, though it does not itself occupy much time it may be the

critical event around which much other preparatory and follow up work revolves.

The analysis of the time budget data produced a mass of detail of how workers spent their time but this chapter concentrates on the major trends which it is felt are enlightening in terms of the roles which community workers undertake and the skills which this may involve. Reference will be made in commenting on the findings both to the Regional Council document: 'Helping the community to organise'[1] which sets out the expectations of the social work department of the role that community work staff should undertake and to the CCETSW curriculum study: 'The teaching of community work'[2] which provides an authoritative statement of the skills that a community worker in a social work context would be expected to have.

It will be helpful to begin by providing a broad summary of the evidence with regard to the allocation of time between different sorts of activity. For this purpose it is useful to distinguish between non-contact activities which occupied 22.4% of worker time overall and contact activities occupying 77.6% of time. The former are activities which do not involve the workers in any direct form of contact with other people whilst the latter are ones in which they are engaged directly with other people. As with other aspects of the time budget it is not possible to compare these findings with other studies. Judgement of whether such a distribution of time should be regarded as normal is therefore totally subjective. However, the activities have been examined not only in terms of the typical amounts of time allocated to them but also in terms of the numbers of workers who engage in the different activities. This latter measure provides a better basis for

assessing whether workers undertake the kinds of activity which the literature suggests that they would be likely to. It is important to remember, however, that though not engaged in some activities during the recorded month, their overall practice may well still involve them in these activities.

Non-contact activities

Table 5.1 presents the time budget for the non-contact activities as a percentage of the total time covered by their recordings for all activities, whilst Table 5.2 indicates the number of workers engaged in each non-contact activity.

In terms of total time allocated to non-contact activities there is not a wide variation between the four groups in the sample, though it is perhaps interesting that the Community Development Organisers spend least time in this activity.

The most substantial and extensive activity was writing, accounting for 6.6% of workers' time. The content analysis shows that this was most commonly recording and report writing, but that written work relating to administrative tasks was almost as common. Writing in relation to information gathering and research work was also significant and for Community Workers writing for community newspapers and preparation of grant applications were significant features.

Though not quite universal. reading and information collection was the second most substantial activity though only taking up half as much time as writing. This appears quite often to have involved joint work with colleagues. Again, the activity often appears related to

Table 5.1

Non-contact activities as a percentage of overall time allocation by sample strata in rank order of time allocation.

| Category | C.W.A. | C.W. | S.C.W. | C.D.O. | All |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Writing | 5.88 | 7.95 | 6.2 | 6.04 | 6.57 |
| Reading and information collection. | 1.89 | 3.60 | 4.33 | 4.75 | 3.74 |
| Travel | 2.78 | 3.36 | 4.29 | 2.88 | 3.38 |
| Administration | 2.67 | 4.01 | 4.18 | 2.08 | 3.37 |
| Recording for Research | 2.41 | 3.31 | 1.97 | 2.31 | 2.53 |
| Administration of resources. | 1.07 | 2.24 | 1.59 | 0.48 | 1.36 |
| Planning Workload | 0.17 | 0.56 | 0.3 | 1.04 | 0.54 |
| Administration for other Groups. | 0.28 | 0.06 | - | - | 0.13 |
| Total as % of all activities. | 20.81 | 26.39 | 23.45 | 18.95 | 22.40 |

Table 5.2

Number of workers recording activity in each non-contact activity by sample strata.

| Category | C.W.A. | C.W. | Senior | C.D.O. | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Writing | 17 | 25 | 5 | 6 | 53 |
| Reading and information collecting. | 14 | 25 | 5 | 6 | 50 |
| Admininistration of resources. | 11 | 18 | 5 | 4 | 38 |
| Administration | 16 | 25 | 5 | 6 | 52 |
| Planning Workload | 6 | 24 | 4 | 3 | 27 |
| Recording for research. | 14 | 24 | 5 | 6 | 49 |
| Travel | 12 | 18 | 5 | 5 | 40 |
| Administration for other groups. | 5 | 5 | - | - | 10 |
| Miscellaneous | 14 | 13 | 3 | 2 | 32 |

administrative tasks. Work related to housing campaigns figures significantly for Community Workers and Community Work Assistants.

If the percentages of time allocated to writing and reading are translated into actual time, a typical worker would spend approximately two and a half hours writing and an hour and twenty minutes in reading and information collection per week. Given the significance attached in the practice theory literature of community work to recording, monitoring and evaluation of work and the likely demands on workers to keep abreast of developments in their area of work, this does not appear to be a very substantial amount of time. As the CCETSW[3] study suggests, the worker:

> "requires the ability to stand back and appraise the situation and evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of, for example, those with whom he is going to work and the feasibility of achieving the goals which a community group may be setting itself."

Given that this activity heading also includes the preparation of reports and applications for funds for projects, and that it will later be shown that helping to obtain resources is the most extensive form of work undertaken, the time given to systematic reflective information gathering and writing seems even more limited. Generally it is held that it is the early stages in community work intervention, of identifying community needs and resources, that involves workers in most information gathering and associated writing, but even after this stage it is assumed that these activities must continue in order to see how the situation may be changing and whether the workers' intervention may be regarded as influencing it. Given the short length of time that many workers have been in post (see Chapter 4) it would be reasonable to

anticipate that many workers would still be involved in the preliminary stage of getting to know the community. However, this evidence is discouraging for those who believe that this should involve extensive investigation.

Travel is the next most substantial non-contact activity, followed by the almost universal activity of administration. At 3.4% of worker time it is not a very time consuming activity, though it should be noted that some of this work scores under other headings.

Administration of resources accounts for just 1.4% of worker time overall and relates primarily to the provision of community premises, facilities and amenities.

Time spent planning workload is not very significant scoring less than 1% of time overall and only being recorded by 50% of the sample. This finding will be discouraging to those who believe community work to require a systematic planned approach to change and may, in part at least, explain the high level of contact time which appears to be unplanned.

Overall, the analysis of non-contact activities does not reveal a substantial level of attention to reflection or analysis of work undertaken. Whilst the researcher regards this as generally problematic for community work, it is likely to be particularly so in relation to Community Development Organisers whom the Director of Social Work[4] has argued should: 'consolidate their role as social planners'.

Contact activities

Turning to the contact activities, Table 5.3, giving the percentages of time allocated to each activity and Table 5.4 the number of workers

Table 5,3

Contact activities as a percentage of overall time allocation by sample strata in overall rank order.

| CATEGORY | CWA % | Rank | CW % | Rank | SCW % | Rank | CDO % | Rank | All % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Other non-planned contacts. | 18.7 | 1 | 17.1 | 1 | 13.2 | 2 | 10.1 | 3 | 16.5 |
| Other pre-planned contacts. | 12.6 | 2 | 16.5 | 2 | 17.2 | 1 | 22.9 | 1 | 16.2 |
| Meetings of non-statutory organisations (non-social). | 10.4 | 3 | 13.5 | 3 | 13.2 | 3 | 11.4 | 2 | 12.3 |
| Phone calls: | | | | | | | | | |
| Incoming | 1.6) | | 1.1) | | 1.7) | | 2.9) | | 2.4) |
| Outgoing | 2.7) | 7 | 3.5) | 5 | 4.6) | 5 | 2.4) | 5 | 3.3) |
| Unspecified | 0.1) | | 0.4) | | 0.1) | | 0.5) | | 0.3) |
| Conferences and Courses. | 5.4 | 5 | 5.1 | 4 | 2.0 | 10 | 4.7 | 7 | 4.9 |
| Doing things with others non-social. | 5.6 | 4 | 4.0 | 6 | 3.9 | 8 | 1.6 | 9 | 4.2 |
| Team/staff meetings | 3.2 | 8 | 3.6 | 7 | 2.1 | 9 | 3.0 | 8 | 3.3 |
| Correspondence: | | | | | | | | | |
| Incoming | 0.1) | | 0.7) | | 3.1) | | 2.9) | | 1.2) |
| Outgoing | 0.4) | 12 | 1.9) | 8 | 1.1) | 7 | 1.8) | 6 | 1.4) |
| Unspecified | 0 ) | | 0.4) | | 0 | | 0.4) | | 0.3) |
| Regular groups - social. | 4.8 | 6 | 0.8 | 17 | - | - | 0.2 | 16 | 2.0 |
| Supervising | 0.1 | 19 | 0.5 | 18 | 6.8 | 4 | 7.4 | 4 | 1.8 |
| Being available at specified times. | 1.8 | 9 | 1.3 | 9 | 0.3 | 13 | - | - | 1.3 |
| Home visits | 1.7 | 10 | 1.0 | 13 | 0.1 | 15 | 0.7 | 12 | 1.2 |
| Union meetings | 0.2 | 18 | 1.1 | 11 | 5.5 | 6 | 0.4 | 13 | 1.1 |
| Being supervised | 1.6 | 11 | 0.9 | 14 | 0.3 | 13 | - | - | 1.0 |
| One-off organised events. | 0.9 | 14 | 1.1 | 10 | - | | 0.4 | 13 | 0.9 |
| Interviewing for staff. | - | - | 0.9 | 14 | 1.4 | 11 | 1.5 | 10 | 0.7 |
| Community Council meetings. | 0.4 | 15 | 0.9 | 14 | 1.0 | 12 | 0.1 | 15 | 0.7 |
| Public meetings | 0.3 | 16 | 1.1 | 12 | - | - | - | - | 0.7 |
| Committee meetings of Regional or District Council. | 1.0 | 13 | 0.2 | 20 | - | - | 0.8 | 11 | 0.5 |
| Community Surveys | 0.3 | 17 | 0.2 | 19 | - | - | - | - | 0.2 |

Table 5.4

Number of workers by sample strata engaging in contact activities.

| CATEGORY | CWA | CW | Senior | CDO | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Other pre-planned contacts. | 17 | 26 | 5 | 6 | 54 |
| Other non-planned contacts. | 17 | 26 | 5 | 6 | 54 |
| Meetings of non-statutory organisations (non-social) | 17 | 26 | 5 | 6 | 54 |
| Phone Calls: | | | | | |
| Incoming | 17 | 23 | 5 | 6 | 52 |
| Outgoing | 17 | 26 | 5 | 6 | 54 |
| Unspecified | 1 | 13 | 2 | 3 | 19 |
| Conferences and Courses | 9 | 12 | 2 | 3 | 26 |
| Doing things with others non-social. | 17 | 22 | 5 | 4 | 48 |
| Team/Staff Meetings | 13 | 21 | 3 | 4 | 41 |
| Correspondence: | | | | | |
| Incoming | 14 | 21 | 5 | 6 | 46 |
| Outgoing | 13 | 25 | 5 | 6 | 49 |
| Unspecified | 1 | 6 | 1 | 1 | 9 |
| Regular groups social | 11 | 6 | - | 2 | 19 |
| Supervising | 1 | 4 | 4 | 5 | 14 |
| Being available at specified times. | 4 | 7 | 1 | - | 12 |
| Home Visits | 12 | 17 | 1 | 1 | 31 |
| Union Meetings | 6 | 10 | 3 | 1 | 20 |
| Being supervised | 14 | 10 | 1 | - | 25 |
| One-off organised events | 7 | 9 | - | 3 | 19 |
| Interviewing for staff | - | 4 | 1 | 3 | 8 |
| Community Council Meetings | 4 | 9 | 2 | 1 | 16 |
| Public Meetings | 4 | 11 | - | - | 15 |
| Committee Meetings of Regional or District Council. | 1 | 2 | - | 3 | 6 |
| Community Surveys | 4 | 3 | - | - | 7 |

recording activity in each category, provide the basis for a general assessment.

The activity category occupying most time overall is other non-planned contacts though its significance is almost matched by the category of other pre-planned contacts. The categories both refer to contacts with others which are not part of a programme of arranged meetings. The difference between them is that the former happens by chance whilst the latter is pre-arranged with agreement as to the purpose of the contact. Both occupy around 16% of time for the sample as a whole, but there are clear variations between the strata of the sample which demonstrate that more senior workers, especially Community Development Organisers, are less prone to unplanned contacts whilst more junior workers, especially Community Work Assistants, are more extensively involved in unplanned contacts.

It may be argued that the managerial role of Community Development Organisers and Seniors gives scope for a greater degree of control over the process of work, whereas the fieldwork focus of the other two groups of workers places them in an inherently more unstructured working environment. In other words, managerial roles are more amenable to a pro-active approach based on the authority of the worker relative to those with whom contact is made, whereas fieldwork is likely to be more reactive to events which may precipitate the worker into unanticipated contacts. Less charitably though, it could be argued that the extensiveness of unplanned contact time might be a reflection of uncertainty and lack of direction in the worker's activity which indicates lack of systematic forethought about the purposes of

intervention in the community. The latter suggestion is supported by the evidence of how non-contact time is used.

The third most significant activity is meetings of non-statutory organisations for non-social purposes which accounts for 12% of time overall. Again, this is a universal activity. The category is a composite one containing meetings both of community organisations and professional groupings. The network of contacts involved and the analysis of the content of these meetings shows that Community Development Organisers are predominantly involved in inter-professional groupings and Community Workers and Community Work Assistants with meetings of community groups.

This would be anticipated from the roles defined by the Social Work Director[5] for each group of workers. Community Development Organisers are expected to take on 'social planning' roles and to have 'oversight of local community work' rather than be directly involved in practice. Seniors, though 'retaining an element of community work practice' have staff supervision as their 'primary role' supplemented by 'liaison with social work teams and with other agencies locally'. The practice of community work is seen as the province of Community Workers and Community Work Assistants.

Table 5.3 provides the time allocations for the remaining categories and their rank order for the sample as a whole and each strata. There appears to be a broad distinction to be drawn between the work activities of Community Work Assistants and Community Workers compared with the two more senior groups in the sample. Thus the former score more highly in relation to: doing things with others non-social, regular social groups (mainly Community Work Assistants), being

available (i.e., at specified times to be contacted), home visits, being supervised, and public meetings. The latter score more highly in relation to: telephone calls, (marginally) correspondence, supervising, interviewing. The pattern of time allocation between activities is reflected in the findings of the network analysis, discussed in the next chapter, which generally shows much more extensive and substantial contacts of a professional nature for Community Development Organisers and Senior Community Workers, and more extensive and substantial community contacts for the other two groups. This is consistent with the role definition of each group of workers.

Some of the findings of the activity analysis are most interesting for their lack of significance in the time budgeting of the workers. Public meetings, meetings of Community Councils and meetings of Regional or District Council Committees and community surveys all score low.

A simple mean average for time spent in a particular activity may not reveal uneven distribution across the sample. Table 5.4 shows the number of workers recording time spent in each activity. This illustrates, for example that only 29% of the sample were involved in Community Council meetings during the recorded month. Similarly, it shows that 41% of Community Work Assistants, 46% of Community Workers and 80% of Seniors received no supervision during the recorded month. This table also suggests that there may be anomolous patterns of work within particular strata arising from the idocyncracies of particular workers. One Community Development Organiser, for example, accounts for all home visits by that group and one Senior for a substantial proportion of the union involvement.

Examining the broad pattern of time allocation between contact activities, Community Workers and Community Work Assistants can be seen to hold similar activity patterns as can Community Development Organisers and Senior Community Workers. However, a more detailed examination of the contents of these activities and the networks of contact involved reveals some significant variations, as well as similarities in the pattern.

Content of activities

Whilst it is interesting to consider the kinds of activities which the workers undertake, the character of their practice is much more illuminatingly revealed through the analysis of the contents of these activities. In order to do this the foll owing discussion refers to those content categories which have come in the top five rank order under several activity headings, either for the total sample or a particular sub-group. Exploring the evidence in this way: 'provision of community premises, facilities and amenities' was the most commonly occurring category of content in the recordings. For the overall sample it was ranked in the top 5 categories of content in twelve separate activities. This category of content was an important element of Community Workers' recordings in the following activities - Meetings with non-statutory organisations and regular groups (non-social), other pre-planned contacts, other non-planned contacts, telephone calls, correspondence. 'Provision of community premises, facilities and amenities' also features prominently in Community Council meetings, public meetings, being supervised, supervising, management of resources and planning workload, but as there were small proportions of time

devoted to these activities by Community Workers, their content is of lesser significance generally. In the major time-consuming activities, the content category 'provision of community premises, facilities and amenities' has a similar prominence for all other sub-groups of workers studied.

The content category 'resource work' also features prominently in the content analysis overall, showing up in the first five content categories for ten separate activities, including the large, time-comsuming activities mentioned above. These activities involve work to obtain the financial means to promote community activities and services, for example, preparing applications to local grants committees. Here, however, Community Workers record this element of work content markedly more than Community Work Assistants. It can be concluded that Community Workers have a greater contribution than Community Work Assistants to providing advice about supporting or assessing community groups' resource needs. At the time of the recordings, the resources in question were largely associated with summer play schemes and their financing. The management and administrative responsibilities of the more senior workers probably account for the relative prominence of the category 'resource work' in several activity headings. For community development organisers, 'resource work' features substantially in eleven separate activity headings. In the activities: meetings of non-statutory organisations and regular groups (non-social) and correspondence, the content of work for Community Development Organisers was first and foremost the assessment of and provision of financial and material assistance for community development activities. For Senior Community Workers this was important, but to a lesser extent.

The content analysis then has revealed that two categories of content 'provision of community premises, facilities and amenities' and 'resource work' are of major importance for community work staff at field level. As the responses to the final interviews indicated, these elements of community workers' duties are believed by the workers to be highly valued by community organisations and expected by employing authorities. However, they are not aspects that appear to receive much attention in discussions among community workers or in the literature. It may be argued that such routine servicing of community organisations and groups is a necessary stage before development of wider community group activity can take place; such categories of content of community work are potentially instrumental to the achievement of other change activities. However, the prevalence of servicing work in the recordings of a large sample of workers, suggests that many community work situations are characterised in those terms, with few 'progressing' to more campaigning or community action styles of work.

That these roles should have such prominence is perhaps surprising in the light of the images that community workers often project about themselves but it is entirely consistent with the expectations placed on workers by their sponsoring department. In his review of community work, the Director of Social Work[6] identifies ten areas of community work activity. These are: information, advice and resource services; housing and the environment; children and parents; elderly and handicapped groups; claimants; the unemployed; health issues, women's issues; legal services and the use of legislation; race relations. Information, advice and resource services corresponds very closely in its description to the activities identified here under the headings;

provision of community premises facilities and amenities and resource work. He assesses these as the primary functions of community work and says:

> "The basic approach of community workers has been to provide to groups the information, advice and other services and resources they require to operate effectively as local organisations. Any group which is mobilised around a particular issue or need requires relevant information, a local base, and access to typing and reprographic facilities."

In relation to the second form of activity listed by the Director of Social Work, housing and the environment, he suggests this has been a predominant and sometimes 'contentious' area of work. Whilst the campaigning style of work on housing does appear to feed the images of community work commonly being involved in conflict, the evidence of the content analysis of the recordings does not indicate this activity to be as widespread as might have been anticipated. Work in this area is recorded under two headings, predictably; 'work with housing campaigns' but also: 'work with tenants associations'. The latter does not exclusively concern housing but this is heavily predominant. Neither category scores highly suggesting both that housing is not as central an issue as assumed and that more conflictual community action styles may have more visibility than extensiveness.

In only one activity, meetings of non-statutory organisations and regular groups (non-social) did: 'work with tenants' associations' feature prominently for Community Workers (ranking 4 with 6.9% of content scores in this activity). A similar finding applies for Community Work Assistants who recorded: 'work with tenants' associations' in the same activity heading, ranking 3, but accounting for a smaller proportion of their activities compared with Community

Workers. Both Community Workers and Assistants recorded: 'work with tenants' associations' prominently in the heading Public meetings. However, as noted in Table 5.3, public meetings themselves accounted for a very small proportion of working time. The evidence which has been presented on 'work with housing campaigns' is of equal interest. This content category features in the Community Workers' recordings of meetings of non-statutory groups and regular groups (non-social), public meetings, Community Council meetings and reading, collecting information and, to a lesser extent, in: being supervised, home visits, pre-planned contacts and Writing. For Community Workers 12% of the recorded content of meetings of non-statutory organisations and regular groups (non-social) was devoted to work with housing campaigns. For Community Work Assistants 8.5% was the corresponding proportion of content. In the other important (time-consuming) activity heading, other pre-planned contacts, the highest proportion of content recorded for 'work with housing campaigns' was 6.2% of Community Workers' total content scores. For Community Workers especially, reading and writing about housing campaigns seems to be quite important and it may be questionable whether this is in proportion to the contact activity related to the same area of work.

The third area of community work activity identified by the Director of Social Work is children and parents. This corresponds with the content category: 'IT/Youth and Children's work'. The writer suspects that the Director does not refer to the youth work dimension directly as there is often contention between the Community Education and Social Work departments as to whether the latter has a role in this area. The

evidence of the research is that workers believe they do. The Director states:[7]

> "The majority of APT's have high proportions of children whose families are likely to be on low incomes and lack necessary material and social support. The proportion of single parents in these areas is also likely to be high. The individual and social needs associated with poverty are compounded by poor local facilities and services and high transport costs. There is a clear role for Community Workers, in association with other social work and education staff, to promote forms of local organisations which seek to secure necessary services for children and their parents..."

For Community Workers and Community Work Assistants, the content category: 'IT/Youth and Children's work' is significant in several activities, though it achieved top ranking in only one activity, regular groups (social). This aspect of work was to some degree magnified by the seasonal duties connected with the planning for and preparation of Easter and summer holiday play schemes. However, it was clear that Community Work Assistants had a greater role in contact work with youth and children. If we examine the activity where the respective sub-groups gave this context category greatest importance, regular groups (social), we find that it occupied 4.8% of Community Work Assistants' time as against 0.8% of Community Workers' time. It is also noteworthy that 'IT/Youth and Children's work' was more apparent in non-contact activities for Community Workers (such as telephone calls and correspondence) than for Community Work Assistants. There were clearly different roles for Community Workers and Assistants which the content analysis goes some way to illuminating.

Another significant category of content was: 'Community care and community service schemes', which were a prominent characteristic of

Community Workers' activity with regular groups (social), but this activity does not account for a significant amount (0.8%) of time. The same category of content shows up in Community Workers' recordings of supervising, being supervised and management of resources. However, there appears not to be an emphasis on: 'community care and community service schemes' in the more practical, face-to-face activities in the field. Community Work Assistants recorded this category of content most significantly in activities such as home visits, telephone calls and writing. It is interesting that in neither sub-group of workers is there a consistent face-to-face involvement with community care groups, and that the relevant activities tend to be background, supportive work. It should be pointed out, of course, that patterns of work for certain individuals were quite eccentric. One particular Community Work Assistant seemed to work full-time with the elderly residents of her area and she contributed in large part to the prominence of 'community care and community service schemes' in the activity headings: home visits, telephone calls and writing.

Generally the community care activities were related to the needs of elderly or handicapped people in the community. Though the Social Work Director's review of community work points to the possibility for issue based campaigning work with these groups, at the time of the research at least there was little evidence of this approach.

In some respects the content analysis results may be useful in what they failed to show. For instance, it is perhaps surprising that the content category: 'work with women's groups' was not more noticeable. In one activity heading, regular groups (social) it featured in the recordings of Community Work Assistants and ranked fifth most important

content category. Two Community Workers did record regular contact with women's groups but this did not achieve notable prominence when content scores were aggregated for all Community Workers. It was clear from the recordings that many of the community groups mentioned throughout the recordings were made up chiefly of women, e.g., tenants' associations, mother and toddler groups, play schemes committees, and so on. Unless the recordings explicitly described the group as a 'women's group', its other characteristic (i.e., aims, activities, style of approach) were reflected in the content analysis. Overall then, there appeared to be an absence of work with groups exploring or campaigning on specifically 'women's issues'.

The limited involvement with groups explicitly concerned with women's issues is not to be explained by lack of permissive policy for Community Workers to operate in this area for the Director's review[8] identifies this as an area for community work practice and states:

> "The recent growth of women's movement has brought into prominence a range of issues which challenge many traditional values about sex roles in society. These issues include matters involving the organisation and delivery of social welfare services and all aspects of social policy."

None of the other activity areas listed by the Social Work Director featured strongly in the contents of workers' activities. His report acknowledges that legal services is a specialist area needing development, whilst he also makes the important point that health focussed work may not be identified as such but be an underlying aspect of other areas of work such as housing. Race relations would not be anticipated as a major activity content as direct work on the problem is only being undertaken in a limited geogrpahical area.

Turning to other categories employed in the content analysis, it was noticeable that in only one activity, the low ranking: management of resources, did Community Workers record: 'corporate working' as a high ranking content category. In this context corporate working is defined as collaborative work with staff of one or more other departments of the Regional or District Council. 'Corporate working' did feature in the recordings of: other pre-planned contacts for Community Work Assistants (ranking 4 with 8.9% of content scores in that activity heading). Clearly there were certain workers who were involved in corporate working, particularly those in specially co-ordinated Initiative Areas (e.g., Priesthill/Nitshill, Renton/Bonhill). However, their contribution was "lost" in the overall content analysis, because a great majority of Community Workers recorded little or no corporate working. It could be concluded that Community Workers' preferred style of work does not include collaboration with other agencies, except where deliberate policy decisions and management directives so prescribe. The evidence suggests that Community Work Assistants are more likely to be involved in corporate working than Community Workers. However, of all four sub-groups of workers, it was Community Development Organisers who were most heavily involved in corporate working, particularly in the activity headings: meetings of non-statutory organisations and regular groups (non-social), team meetings and other pre-planned contacts. Again the same finding applies to Senior Community Workers but to a lesser extent.

Perhaps a more surprising outcome of the content analysis is that: work with a forum/network of community groups' is found to be a prominent category of content in only the small (in terms of time spent) activity headings, public meetings and management of resources. This

probably reflects a generally parochial neighbourhood orientation on the part of workers as revealed in their responses to the final interviews (see Chapter 10). For the supervisory staff, Community Development Organisers and Senior Community Workers, 'work with social work management' is understandably more prominent than with their field work colleagues. Of the two sub-groups, Community Development Organisers had the greater proportion of their work content in this category. It was noticeable that Community Development Organisers' recordings showed: 'work with social work management' in the two headings meetings of non-statutory organisations and regular groups (non-social) and in team/staff meetings. Senior Community Workers did not meet social work management to any significant degree in these activities.

If general conclusions from the results of the content analysis were to be drawn, then the following points could be made, after the caveat that the recordings served to point up a diversity of patterns of work and in some cases, quite eccentric and anomalous activities.

Firstly, community development staff in the Social Work Department collaborate with each other at all levels over a high proportion of their responsibilities. This is discussed more fully in the next chapter.

Secondly, the content analysis results suggest that community work staff are primarily involved in non-controversial support for community groups and organisations. At local level, the provision of material and financial resources is the most significant feature of community workers' duties. This is also reflected in the work of supervisory staff.

Thirdly, following on from the second point, it is noticeable that apart from set-piece exercises (such as the preparation of Area Profiles), locally based staff do not appear to have active involvement in policy initiatives on behalf of the Social Work Department or the Regional Council. Such involvement seems to be limited, in practical terms, to Community Development Organisers and Senior Community Workers.

Fourthly, surprisingly little campaigning work is done by community work staff at all levels.

It is interesting to speculate as to what conditions this pattern of work. Is it a product of the dispositions of the workers, the policies and procedures of their employing agencies or the expectations of the consumer organisations? The research cannot definitively answer these questions but the material obtained from workers in the final interviews with them, which explored their own motivations and perceptions of the other parties to the procress of community work, is illuminating. The material is discussed extensively in Parts IV and V but it is worth noting that workers indicated an attachment to relatively non-directive community development styles of working in which the resourcing of community groups to develop their own responses to their needs would be central. In discussing their perceptions of their employing agency, the workers expressed the belief that it was relatively non-controversial service development activity which was most valued. How far the content of their activities is a response to this perception or a product of their own dispositions remains open to question. The very small amount of time allocated to planning of workload (0.54%) may suggest, however, that the workers have a tendency to be reactive to the influences around

them rather than operating from a preformed set of objectives and allied strategy.

Summary

Analysis of what workers do was undertaken in relation first to the activities which do not involve contact with others and then in relation to those that do. Each of these was explored in terms of the contents of the activities undertaken. In relation to activities not involving contact with other persons in the process of the activity, writing of reports and writing for administrative purposes is most time consuming. This is followed by time allocated to reading and information collection. However, little time seems to be given to reflection, systematic analysis or workload planning.

Turning to the workers' activities involving contact with other people. Here, unplanned contacts, that is, ones which occur by chance without a predefined focus, occupy the most time. They are followed closely by pre-planned meetings for specific purposes. However, Community Development Organisers and Senior Community Workers spend less time in unplanned work than their community worker and Community Work Assistant colleagues.

The third most common contact activity is meetings of non-statutory organisations. For Community Workers and Community Work Assistants this primarily consists of meetings of community groups but for Community Development Organisers and Senior Community Workers inter-professional groups predominate.

Overall, little time is spent in District or Regional Council meetings, Community Councils or public meetings.

In terms of the content of work involved in these contacts, at local community level, provision of material and financial resources to groups is most common. Workers' activities are primarily orientated to servicing rather than issue-based action (though the latter is less unusual among community workers). For Community Development Organisers and Senior Community Workers, work with social work management and corporate working are more common than for their colleagues.

References

1. Director of Social Work 'Helping the Community to Organise', Strathclyde Regional Council, 1984.

2. Central Council for Education and Training in Social Work, 'Social Work Curriculum Study - the teaching of Community Work', 1974.

3. CCETSW, Op. Cit.

4. Director of Social Work, Op. Cit.

5. Director of Social Work, Op. Cit.

6. Director of Social Work, Op. Cit.

7. Director of Social Work, Op. Cit.

8. Director of Social Work, Op. Cit.

# Chapter 6

## Who do Community Workers Work With?

Inevitably in examining the nature of the work which community work staff undertake, some of the broad trends in terms of who the workers have most contact with in the process of their work will have become apparent. The purpose of this chapter, using material from the initial questionnaire and through exploration of the correlations between the activity and network analyses is to provide a more detailed exploration of the nature and patterns of the contacts between workers and other parties. The interest of the material lies in the answers which it offers to a number of questions. At a basic level, does community work involve more time being spent with members of the community, other professional workers or politicians? Within each of these groups what are the most significant sub-divisions? For example, is it the case that Community Workers meet large numbers of members of the community in the process of their work or are their community contacts largely restricted to the small numbers of people who are the active members of community groups? Does the fact that the workers are employed in the Social Work Department mean that their inter-professional contacts are mainly with other departmental employees or do they cross boundaries into other departments or the non-statutary sector? Within their own departmental colleagues is it primarily other Community Workers with whom they spend time or is there a significant interface with social workers? Is there extensive contact with managerial staff of their own

department? To what degree are these contacts with others created purposefully and to what extent are they simply a product of people being in the same place at the same time? To what degree are there variations in the patterns of contact for different designations of worker, for example do Community Development Organisers spend more time with managerial staff and politicians or Community Workers and Community Work Assistants more time with community groups? What are the predominant contents of contacts with the different groups?

The answers to these questions are interesting in themselves in so far as they help to demystify the nature of community work but they also have a value in helping to clarify its organisational character and the nature of the knowledge and skills required of Community Workers.

In the initial questionnaire to workers data was collected not only relating to their personal characteristics but also to organisational features of their work. This provides a useful entry to a discussion of who workers work with.

Organisational Context

The aspects of the organisational context of the workers which were explored sought to establish: the nature of the office base from which workers normally operate; their likely levels of contact with workers in other professions; their likely contacts with other community work staff in the Social Work Department; the nature of other bases from which workers regularly operate, and the pattern of their accountability within the agency.

Table 6.1 indicates the primary bases from which workers were operating. In relation to these figures, perhaps the most notable

Table 6.1 Primary office base by sample strata

| | C.W.A. | C.W. | S.C.W. | C.D.O. | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Social Work Area Team | 6 | 8 | 1 | - | 15 |
| District Community Development Team (in separate premises) | | 3 | | - | 3 |
| District Community Development Team (in District H.Q.) | 4 | 5 | 1 | 4 | 14 |
| Community/flat/shop | 6 | 4 | 1 | | 11 |
| Special Project/Area Initiative | 1 | 6 | 2 | | 9 |
| District S.W. H.Q. | 1 | | | 2 | 3 |
| Other | | 1 | | | 1 |
| Total | 18 | 27 | 5 | 6 | 56 |

feature is the complicated variety of locations from which the workers primarily operate. Overall, the most common settings are Area Social Work Teams and Community Development Teams located in District headquaters. The Social Work Department at the time of the study was administratively organised into five Divisions each of which contained two or more Districts. There were twelve Districts in total and these provided the operational base for management of fieldwork services. The locations of the Community Development Organisers is of particular interest. Though all were locatd at District Headquarter offices, two were not located with a team of Community Workers, whilst of the remaining four only one had his full community work team located in the same premises. Only two had more than five workers in the same base.

Table 6.2 below indicates the number of workers in each strata who could have been expected to have contact with workers from other agencies as a result of common location in the same office premises. It should be noted that many workers have contact with more than one other group.

Most notable, as might be expected, is the level of common location with social workers or other social work staff. Common location with other departments is far less common and is largely accounted for by staff in Area Initiative projects.

By category, 63% of Community Workers, 61% of Community Work Assistants, all the Community Development Organisers and all but one of the Senior Community Workers were located with other social work staff. Respectively, 22% of Community Work Assistants and 26% of Community Workers were located in isol ation from workers in any other professional discipline.

Table 6.2 Potential contacts with other workers resulting from common location by sample strata

| | C.W.A. | C.W. | S.C.W. | C.D.O. | All |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Social Workers | 11 | 15 | 4 | 6 | 36 |
| Other Social Work Staff | 11 | 17 | 4 | 6 | 38 |
| Voluntary Agency Workers | - | 1 | - | - | 1 |
| Community Education | 3 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 9 |
| Housing | 2 | - | - | 1 | 3 |
| Health Visitors | 1 | 2 | 1 | - | 4 |
| Other | 2 | 3 | - | 4 | 9 |
| None | 4 | 7 | 1 | - | 12 |

In addition to asking about their primary work base the questionnaire asked whether workers normally worked from anywhere other than their primary base. Overall, 37% said that they did. All of these were Community Workers or Community Work Assistants.

In addition to examining potential levels of contact with other professionals in the same office base, it was felt also to be useful to identify the number of other community work staff with whom respondents shared premises. Table 6.3 provides a breakdown of the number of colleagues with whom workers shared their primary operational base.

Looking at these figures, a number of interesting points emerge. Firstly, exactly half the sample worked in settings alongside two or less other community work colleagues, yet the range runs from none to sixteen colleagues in the same location. Interestingly the group with the smallest numbers of colleagues in the same setting was Community Work Assistants for whom the figure for two or less colleagues rises to 61%. Given their relative inexperience and lack of training and hence presumed need for supervision and support, this is interesting. It should be noted, however, that only four Community Work Assistants were not located in a base with a Community Worker, Community Development Organiser or Senior Community Worker.

As noted above, Community Development Organisers were often isolated in terms of direct work location from the staff for whom they are managerially responsible. If their position is compared to that of a Social Work Area Officer, this might be considered a strange circumstance. Two Community Development Organisers responsible for 23 and 19 Community Development posts respectively, were located with only two members of their staff. Only one was located with his full team.

Table 6.3
Number of colleagues in the same work base by sample strata - percentages in brackets

| | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3-5 | 6-10 | 11 or more |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| C.W.A. | 1 | 6 | 4 | 2 | 4 | 1 |
| C.W. | 4 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 5 | 6 |
| S.C.W. | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 0 |
| C.D.O. | 1 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Total | 6(10.7) | 11(19.6) | 11(19.6) | 9(16.1) | 12(21.4) | 7(12.5) |

50% 50%

Whilst this may be explained by the District wide responsibilities of Community Development Organisers and the neighbourhood focus of most community development work, it nevertheless presents logistical problems for adequate supervision and management. Senior Community Workers appear to be more directly located with groups of field staff.

Turning finally to the question of patterns of accountability, some complexity is apparent. As Table 6.4 indicates, the patterns for other categories of worker were not so clear.

The striking feature of these results is the complex variations of accountability which workers understand themselves to have. It is difficult to identify patterns which hold consistently across the sample. Why, for example, when fifteen workers (Table 6.1) are located in area teams, are four accountable to the area officer but the remainder to other senior staff?

Only one member of staff seems totally unclear about his accountability but a further six report dual accountability. Two claim accountability to colleagues as well as to the formal organisational hierarchy.

Clearly accountability patterns are affected by local conditions. Special Projects and Area Initiatives, for example, impose corporate approaches on the established hierarchy of professional disciplines. As Chapter 3 indicated, the development of community work in the Region flows from a history of different patterns existing prior to the emergence of a coherent community work policy and this probably explains some of the variety of lines of accountability.

Table 6.4
Accountability by sample strata

| Designated Officer | No-one | C.D.O. | C.D.O. and other | Project Leader | S.C.W. | C.W. | S.W. Area Officer | District Manager |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| C.W.A. | 1 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 7 | 4 | | 1 |
| C.W. | | 13 | 2 | 2 | 6 | | 3 | 1 |
| S.C.W. | | 4 | | | | | 1 | |
| C.D.O. | | | | | | | | 6 |

Comment on organisational location

The evidence relating to the location and accountability of workers provides some valuable insights into the organisational nature of community work. It is immediately apparent that, in common with social work as a whole, the practice of the workers is characterised by what Smith' has called its 'front line' nature. Though community work is bureaucratically organised with line management accountability ultimately running through to the Director of Social Work who, as has been shown in Chapter 2, has laid out a policy framework for his staff, the actual location of the majority of workers is physically distant from a central management hierarchy. Indeed, many workers operate either totally, or for a significant part of their time, away from immediate contact with their line managers to whom they have indicated that they regard themselves as accountable. As will be shown later in discussion of the factors which influence the way in which workers practice, they claim a quite high degree of autonomy in interpreting their roles in the community. This may in part at least be related to their physical location which is an obstacle to direct supervision and control and is likely to lead to relative independence in the different operational units for practice.

Though it was suggested in Chapter 4 that on the basis of their levels of training the workers might be regarded as of semi-professional status, there is a high degree of opportunity for workers who are in the 'front line' to exercise their own professional authority at the expense of the administrative authority of the bureaucractic hierarchy. This tendency will inevitably be reinforced by the fact that the work places from which the workers commonly operate, particularly the community

flats, are buildings extensively used, and in some cases managed by, the consumers of their services. The effect of this is that workers will tend to be influenced by their community contacts. In fact, it is likely that reaction to the way in which workers operate will be more immediate and more direct from consumers than it is from their formal structure of accountability. This tendency will be likely to be reinforced for those Community Workers and Community Work Assistants in particular, who identify themselves as bureaucratically accountable to a line manager who is also located in a setting where there is likely to be strong consumer influence. In other words, both supervisor and supervisee are subject to strong direct community influence.

The role of the consumer in community work is not that of passive recipient of service. Rather, community groups exist as a reflection of factors which have motivated the membership to become active, whether this be a housing problem or services for the elderly. The worker may influence what the community comes to see as important but control of the focus of activity lies largely with community members. The activities of the former are in this sense therefore enabled and sanctioned by the community. More, therefore, than is common for many other activities in social work departments which often involve the exercise of statutory authority in relation to consumers, community work is dependent on its consumers to legitimate many of its actions. In this sense there is more organisational permeability than in most other public service occupations. The consumers generally, though not as a product of any collective decision making beyond the immediate locality, exert a crucial influence over what organisational goals can and will be

pursued. This is inherant in the nature of community work but it is reinforced by the location of practitioners.

The general pattern of worker contacts

Turning to the evidence obtained from the workers recordings, the time-budget analysis of contact activities presented in Table 5.3 in the previous chapter begins to give some indications of the range and intensity of the contacts with the other parties to the community work process. Similarly, the discussion of the content analysis has begun to explore corporate working and work with social work department management. However, it is the correlation of the activity analysis material with the network analysis which provides the basis for a time budget of these contacts. The analysis has enabled scrutiny from two angles, firstly by exploring the nature of the contacts made under each activity heading and, secondly, by examining the range of activities within which the workers had contact with the others. It will be helpful to begin, however, with an overall indication of the relative proportions of time that workers spent with the other parties to the community work process.

Table 6.5 provides a breakdown of the mean percentages of time spent by each strata of the sample in contact with other groups and combinations of groups, whilst Table 6.6 indicates the number of workers in each strata making contacts of each kind. Comparison of the two tables provides an indication of both the intensity and extensiveness of contacts of different kinds. It should be noticed that whereas previously time budget figures have been presented as percentages of

Table 6.5 Network analysis contacts by strata as a % of total contact time

| | S.W.D. Comm. wk. Staff only | S.W.D. Comm. wk. & S.W. Staff | S.W.D. S.W. Staff only | Comm. Ed. Dept. staff only | Other Stat. C.W. staff only | Other stat. non C.W. staff only | Non stat. agency staff only | More than 1 stat. or non-stat agency | Community group members only | Ordinary members Community only | Community group & ord. mbrs. comm. | Politicians only | Politicians & Community members (gp. & ord.) | C.W.'s and Community members | C.W.'s, S.W.'s and Community members | Social Workers and Community members | Community members and other agency staff | Politicians and other agency staff | Service staff | Unspecified | Politicians, other agency & Community mbrs. | Private/commercial agency | Paid workers of community groups |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| CWA | 14.9 | 3.8 | 5.1 | 2.4 | 0.7 | 5.8 | 1.7 | 1.2 | 32.6 | 8.2 | 0.7 | 2.0 | 0.4 | 2.5 | 1.0 | 1.3 | [illegible].0 | 0.4 | 0.1 | 8.4 | | 1.0 | 1.4 |
| CW | 17.9 | 4.8 | 6.2 | 2.2 | 0.9 | 3.7 | 2.1 | 2.0 | 28.0 | 6.2 | 0.6 | 1.2 | 0.6 | 3.3 | 0.5 | 0.4 | 5.5 | 1.0 | 0.5 | 9.5 | 0.8 | 0.9 | 1.1 |
| SCW | 29.8 | 6.2 | 6.2 | 3.4 | | 3.4 | 6.6 | 8.3 | 10.6 | 2.0 | | 0.4 | 0.6 | 0.5 | 0.6 | 0.6 | 3.9 | | 0.5 | 11.6 | 3.3 | 1.2 | 0.3 |
| CDO | 28.6 | 7.4 | 17.4 | 3.5 | 0.1 | 4.9 | 3.2 | 4.9 | 6.7 | 1.6 | | 2.4 | | 1.5 | 1.1 | 0.7 | 3.1 | 0.9 | 0.7 | 8.1 | 0.9 | 0.3 | 1.9 |
| All | 19.4 | 4.9 | 7.3 | 2.5 | 0.7 | 4.5 | 2.5 | 2.6 | 25.4 | 5.9 | 0.5 | 1.6 | 0.5 | 2.6 | 0.7 | 0.8 | 4.6 | 0.7 | 0.4 | 9.1 | 0.8 | 0.9 | 1.2 |

Table 6.6
Number of Workers by Strata recording contact - network analysis

| Category | C.W. | C.W.A. | Senior | C.D.O. | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| S.W.D., C.W. Staff only | 26 | 17 | 5 | 6 | 54 |
| S.W.D. C.W. & S.W. Staff | 20 | 12 | 5 | 6 | 43 |
| S.W.D., S.W. Staff only | 24 | 14 | 5 | 6 | 49 |
| Comm. Ed. Dept. Staff only | 21 | 11 | 5 | 6 | 43 |
| Other stat. C.W. Staff only | 7 | 8 | | 1 | 16 |
| Other stat. non C.W. Staff | 22 | 17 | 5 | 6 | 50 |
| Non-stat Agency Staff | 24 | 16 | 4 | 6 | 50 |
| More than 1 stat or non-stat. Agency | 13 | 6 | 4 | 6 | 29 |
| Comm. group members only | 26 | 17 | 5 | 6 | 51 |
| Ord. mbrs. comm. only | 21 | 17 | 5 | 6 | 49 |
| Comm. grp. & ord. mbrs. comm. | 7 | 7 | | | 14 |
| Politicians only | 14 | 8 | 3 | 6 | 31 |
| Pol. & comm. mbrs. (gp. & ord.) | 5 | 3 | 1 | | 9 |
| C.W.'s & comm. mbrs. | 16 | 12 | 1 | 5 | 34 |
| C.W.'s, S.W.'s & comm. mbrs. | 6 | 6 | 2 | 3 | 17 |
| S.W.'s & comm. mbrs. | 5 | 10 | 1 | 3 | 19 |
| Comm. mbrs. & other Agency Staff | 23 | 12 | 5 | 4 | 44 |
| Pol. & other Agency Staff | 8 | 1 | | 2 | 11 |
| Service Staff | 13 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 24 |
| Unspecified | 25 | 16 | 5 | 6 | 52 |
| Pol., other Agency & comm. mbrs. | 4 | | 3 | 2 | 9 |
| Private/commercial Agency | 18 | 10 | 4 | 4 | 36 |
| Paid workers of comm. gps. | 13 | 8 | 1 | 4 | 26 |

total time, in this chapter they are presented as percentages of contact time only.

It is immediately apparent that two categories stand out as consuming an extensive amount of time. These are contact with other community workers in the social work department and contact with community group members only. Both of these are universal activities accounting for an average of 19.4% and 25.4% of contact time across the sample as a whole. Significant variations occur, however, between the sample strata. Thus Seniors and Community Development Organisers spend significantly more time on average with other community workers (29.8% and 28.6% respectively) than their Community Worker and Community Work Assistant colleagues. Conversely it is the latter two who spend substantially more time with the members of community groups. Thus Community Workers and Community Work Assistants spend 28.0% + 32.3% of their time and Community Development Organisers and Seniors 6.7% + 10.6% of their time respectively. Thus amount of contact with other community work staff can be seen to increase with seniority whilst the amount of contact with community group members decreases with seniority. No doubt this broad pattern reflects the job descriptions of workers in each category. This theme is explored further later in the commentary, by assessment of the activity contexts in which these contacts occur. At this stage, however, it will be more helpful to appreciate the broad pattern of contacts.

In rank order of network contacts, in third place comes the category: unspecified, which accounts for 9.1% of time. By definition this cannot be explored further. However, it is followed closely by: contact with social work staff on their own. In this category the most

noticeable feature of the results is the substantially larger proportion of time the Community Development Organisers spend with this group, 17.4% compared with 5.1% and 6% for each of the other strata. Contact with social workers is, however, an almost universal activity, experienced by nearly 91% of the sample.

Following this, contact with ordinary members of the community represents 5.9% of contact time overall. Though all Community Development Organisers and Seniors were engaged in this it represents only 1.97% and 1.58% of their time respectively, whereas for the Community Work Assistants and Community Workers (80% of whom were involved), it represents 8.1%

Beyond this point in the rank order no category achieves a score of more than 5%. However, as Table 6.6 indicates, there is still extensive involvement of sample members in the other contacts even though they consume relatively small amounts of time. There are also a few points at which the patterns for particular sample strata vary significantly from the general pattern. Senior Community Workers, for example, appear more prone to contacts with non-statutory agencies, and alongside Community Development Organisers to be more involved in contacts combining community work and social work staff from the Social Work Department. In order to take fuller account of the less substantial categories, Table 6.7 has been produced combining categories to indicate the broad patterns in relation to relative levels of contact with other professional workers, community members and politicians. The figures for professional contacts are sub-divided between Social Work Department community work staff, other Social Work Department staff and staff of other agencies.

Table 6.7
Combined network categories by sample strata as a percentage of contact time

| | Professional Contacts | | | Members of the Community | Politicians |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | S.W.D. C.W. Staff | Other S.W.D. Staff | Other Agency Staff | | |
| C.W.A. | 22.2 | 11.2 | 16.2 | 50.7 | 2.8 |
| | | 49.6 | | | |
| C.W. | 26.5 | 11.9 | 17.4 | 45.9 | 3.6 |
| | | 55.8 | | | |
| S.C.W. | 37.1 | 13.6 | 25.6 | 18.8 | 4.3 |
| | | 76.3 | | | |
| C.D.O. | 38.6 | 26.6 | 20.6 | 14.7 | 4.2 |
| | | 85.8 | | | |
| All | 27.6 | 13.7 | 18.9 | 41.0 | 3.6 |
| | | 60.2 | | | |

N.B. Totals add up to more than 100% due to the inclusion of combination categories in more than one grouping.

Table 6.7 reinforces the pattern of higher levels of professional contact for more senior workers and relatively higher levels of community contact for more junior workers, though only Community Work Assistants spend more time with the community than professional staff. The table also serves to emphasise the limited levels of contact with politicians.

The overall pattern of contacts involved in the workers' activities is probably fairly predictable in that it reflects the role functions of the different designations of workers as set out in the policy document 'Helping the Community to Organise'.[2] In it the Director of Social Work comments on the "direct management and supervision of staff" which has become the central role of Community Development Organisers and in which they have increasingly been supported by the appointment of Senior Community Workers. Of Community Development Organisers he also says:

> "As a result of the Region's social strategy, the demands of social planning work, including collaborative working with other agencies, have also increased dramatically."

In relation to Seniors he says:

> "Their appointments have been justified in terms of the unrealistic span of control of Community Development Officers and their primary role is that of staff supervision..... Most retain an element of community work practice, and liaise with social work teams and with other agencies locally."

These role descriptions are entirely consistent with the patterns of how these workers were found to actually spend their time. The much more community focussed contacts of the other two groups of workers are equally consistent with job descriptions. The basic function of the Community Worker is stated as:

> "To assist the development of locally relevant forms of community organisation within defined areas of need."

That for Community Work Assistants is:

> "To assist the community worker(s) in the achievement of tasks within designated areas".

Patterns of Contact in main areas of activity

Before looking in more detail at the nature of the contacts between the workers and each of the main contact groups, it will be valuable to explore the networks of contact involved in the major activity areas as identified in the activity analysis and discussed in Chapter 5. Particular attention will be given to the top three activity categories: other non-planned contacts; other pre-planned contacts, and meetings of non-statutory organisations (non-social). Combined they account for 58.1% of contact time.

Other non-planned contacts

In relation to the 'other non-planned contacts' category, the highest proportion of time here is spent with other community workers, though for Community Workers and Community Work Assistants, slightly more time is spent with members of community groups. It is Community Development Organisers and Senior Community Workers who spend most unplanned time with community work colleagues. Overall, the third most common contact group under this heading is other social work staff. Here the Community Development Organisers are much more substantially involved than their colleagues, indicating a much higher general level of integration into the work of their employing department. Table 6.8, below, shows the percentages of time spent by each strata of the sample and the sample as a whole in unplanned contact with the main categories of contact used in the network analysis: professional contacts (sub-

Table 6.8 Unplanned contact by combined network groups: % of time

Professional Contacts

| | Social Work Dept. C.W. Staff | Social Work Dept. Staff | Other Agencies | Members of Community | Politicians |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| C.W.A. | 24.5 | 15.5 | 15.1 | 45.1 | 1.4 |
| | | 54.2 | | | |
| C.W. | 33.0 | 12.8 | 11.7 | 41.6 | 1.5 |
| | | 55.1 | | | |
| Seniors | 41.5 | 10.5 | 15.0 | 30.5 | 3.4 |
| | | 65.0 | | | |
| C.D.O. | 41.8 | 33.8 | 8.0 | 5.6 | 4.3 |
| | | 83.4 | | | |
| All | 31.0 | 15.3 | 12.9 | 39.3 | 1.8 |
| | | 57.6 | | | |

N.B. Totals may add up to more than 100% due to inclusion of combination categories in more than one grouping.

divided between social work department community work staff, social work department staff and other agencies), contacts with members of the community and contacts with politicians.

It is apparent examining this table that in relation to unplanned contact, those with other professional workers, especially community work colleagues from the respondents own agency, are most significant. Indeed, for Community Development Organisers the percentage of unplanned contact time with other professional colleagues is very substantial, however, this is as much a reflection of the absence of substantial contact with community members who are far more significant for the other three groups. Politicians are generally a quite insignificant group in terms of unplanned contact time.

Other pre-planned contacts

The results follow a very similar pattern to those for unplanned contacts. Overall contacts with other social work department community work staff are most common, followed by contacts with members of community groups though the latter are actually more substantial for Community Workers and Community Work Assistants, but relatively insignificant for the other two groups. Again, contacts with other social work department staff are in third place, but dominated by Community Development Organisers. Table 6.9, below, shows the percentages of contact time in the category spent with professionals, community members and politicians.

These combined figures show the preponderance in pre-planned contacts of involvement of other professional workers. This is especially true for Community Development Organisers and Seniors. Other

Table 6:9 - Other pre-planned contacts by combined network groups: % of time

| | Professional Contacts | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Social Work Dept. C.W. staff | Social Work Dept. staff | Other Agencies | Members of Community | Politicians |
| C.W.A. | 28.8 | 13.8 | 38.8 | 36.3 | 3.5 |
| | | 72.0 | | | |
| C.W. | 28.4 | 12.9 | 29.3 | 43.2 | 6.5 |
| | | 66.3 | | | |
| S.C.W. | 36.4 | 18.3 | 46.9 | 17.3 | 3.3 |
| | | 93.1 | | | |
| C.D.O. | 36.1 | 32.4 | 31.0 | 17.1 | 5.4 |
| | | 89.1 | | | |
| All | 30.6 | 17.2 | 33.7 | 34.0 | 5.2 |
| | | 74.4 | | | |

N.B. Totals may add up to more than 100% due to inclusion of combination categories in more than one grouping.

community work staff are involved in about a third of these contacts. This is slightly higher for Community Development Organisers and Seniors, both of whom, especially the latter, are more likely to have contact with social work department staff. Conversely, Community Workers and Community Work Assistants are substantially more likely to have contact with members of the community in pre-planned meetings. Contact with politicians is not substantial but is noticeably higher for Community Workers and Community Developments Officers in this form of contact.

Non statutory group meetings

In relation to the category: 'meetings of non-statutory groups (non social)', the analysis reveals the breakdown between professional and community groups most clearly. For Community Work Assistants and Community Workers community group meetings are by far the most important category, whereas Senior Community Workers and Community Development Organisers have a much broader range of types of meeting with which they are involved. The latter have a much higher propensity for involvement in professional and inter-professional groupings. Table 6.10 provides the breakdown of percentages of time spent with the major categories used for the network analysis.

These figures bear out the trend already identified by examination of individual forms of contact. The levels of professional contact for Community Work Assistants and Community Workers may at first appear misleading. It must be recognised that whilst other professional workers may be involved in the non-statutory groups these workers attend, the large majority of them are in combination with members of

Table 6:10 - Non-statutory groups - non social meetings by combined network groups;% of time

| | Professional Contacts | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | S.W. Dept. C.W. Staff | Social Work Dept. Staff | Other Agencies | Members of Community | Politicians |
| C.W.A. | 11.5 | 10.1 | 17.4 | 90.9 | |
| | | 34% | | | |
| C.W. | 15.6 | 5.1 | 27.8 | 85.3 | 6.0 |
| | | 44.6% | | | |
| S.C.W. | 12.8 | 15.3 | 52.8 | 53.5 | 12.8 |
| | | 73.0% | | | |
| C.D.O. | 27.3 | 30.8 | 36.0 | 33.1 | 9.8 |
| | | 70.4% | | | |
| All | 15.5 | 14.4 | 28.2 | 77.9 | 5.4 |
| | | 52.4% | | | |

N.B. Totals may add up to more than 100% due to inclusion of combination categories in more than one grouping.

the community usually at community group meetings. This is demonstrated by the 90.9% for Community Work Assistants in non-statutory groups involving community members and the 85.3% for Community Workers. For Senior Community Workers, more than half the non-statutory groups of a non social character that they attend involve members of the community, but for Community Development Organisers the figures show only a third of their time in such contacts whereas almost 80% of their contacts involve professional workers.

The Senior Community Workers appear almost as likely to spend time in non-statutory group meetings with staff of other agencies as with members of the community. They have most contact with other agency staff, whereas Community Development Organisers have substantially more contact than other strata of the sample with other community work and social work staff. That Community Work Assistants had no contact at all with politicians in non-statutory group meetings is worthy of note. The two more senior groups in the sample have most political contact.

Overall, the pattern of these results suggests different work styles for Community Work Assistants and Community Workers from the Community Development Organisers with Senior Community Workers falling somewhere between. The former are clearly directly involved in local neighbourhood work to a very large extent and much less involved in inter-professional groups. The extensive involvement of Community Development Organisers in the latter suggests more social planning than direct community development, action or neighbourhood work roles.

Other categories

Turning to the contacts involved in the remaining activity categories, a few further features of interest emerge, though most reflect the overall pattern. Time spent in staff or team meetings produces some interesting variations. Whilst most such meetings are with community work colleagues only, Community Workers and Community Work Assistants are substantially more likely to attend meetings with social work colleagues also present than the other two groups. Thus, though generally they have less contact with social work colleagues than Community Development Organisers and Senior Community Workers, at formal team meetings and staff meetings this is more common. This suggests that though structurally there may be contact, it does not tend to lead on to the promotion of any substantial level of collaborative practice.

Regular groups - social/recreational, is a category dominated by Community Work Assistants for whom it occupies 6.2% of contact time. The vast majority of this time is with community groups and largely concerns IT youth and children's work and work with the elderly. It again reinforces the picture of more service orientated activities by Community Work Assistants.

Union meetings are an activity in which community workers are extensively involved with their social worker colleagues.

The patterns of contact with professional workers, politicians and the community

Turning to the range of contexts in which the workers had contact with the major groups with whom they are involved in their work, it is important to be careful not to assume that extensiveness of contact is

necessarily a measure of its significance. With this in mind contacts with politicians were examined further.

1. Politicians (see Table 6.11)

Since much of this contact time appears to represent occasions where workers happened to be in the same place at the same time rather than being in direct communication, the picture of a low level of significant contact tends to be reinforced. Taking the four network categories for contact with politicians the most significant is contact with politicians alone representing just over one-third of these contacts, though the proportion for Community Development Organisers is 55%. Alongside this it is worth noting that 40% of these contacts with politicians, when examined in the activity analysis, were in the other pre-planned category. If these contexts can be taken to be the ones in which most significant contacts occur then it will be apparent how small an amount of time is involved. When taken in the light of the often negative attitudes of workers towards the understaning that they believe politicians have of the nature of community work as revealed in the final interviews, the apparent lack of attention to improving their understanding is curious. Similarly, the very small amount of time (Table 5.3) spent at District or Regional Council meetings suggests a lack of direct monitoring of the political component of the policy making process.

2. Professional contacts

Examining the professional contacts of the workers it is helpful to continue to draw the distinction between Social Work Department

Table 6:11 - Distriubution of contact time with politicians (presented as a percentage of contact time in that category) by sample strata

| | Politicians alone | Politicians & Comm. Members | Politicians & other Agencies | Politicians, other Agency & Comm. Members |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| C.W.A. | 39.6 | 30.2 | 30.2 | |
| C.W. | 33.4 | 17.0 | 27.5 | 21.9 |
| S.C.W. | 8.7 | 14.5 | | 76.1 |
| C.D.O. | 55.9 | | 21.7 | 22.3 |
| All | 35.4 | 15.7 | 23.6 | 25.2 |

community work staff, other Social Work Department staff and staff of other agencies. In relation to the first (see Table 6.12), of the 27.6% of contact time spent with this group, 19.4% was with them alone and the substantial majority of the remainder in combination with other professional workers. Overall, time with other Social Work Department community workers increases substantially with seniority. The two most common activity categories into which these contacts fall are other pre-planned and other un-planned contacts. The ratio of un-planned to planned contact time is much higher for Community Work Assistants and Community Workers than the most senior groups. The chance nature of much contact may lead to questions about its purposefulness.

Turning to the patterns of contact with other social work staff, Community Development Organisers have substantially more contact in this category than their colleagues (26.6% of contact time compare with an overall mean for the sample of 13.7%). For all groups, contact with other social work staff is primarily an inter-professional activity (i.e. it occurs outwith contact with community members or other persons) and for all groups the contact is more likely to be only with other social work staff. Again, contacts are predominantly in the other pre-planned and other non-planned categories and again, the likelihood of the contact being unplanned decreases with seniority. More senior workers are less likely to be involved in meetings with other social work staff where members of the community are also involved.

As the discussion of the content of workers activities in the previous chapter showed the contacts of more senior staff with members of their own department also tend to involve managerial functions.

Table 6:12

Distribution of contact time with other community work staff of the Social Work Department (presented as a percentage of contact time in that category) by sample strata

| | Community Workers only | Community Workers & Social Workers | Community Workers & Community Members | Community Workers, Social Workers & Community Members |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| C.W.A. | 67.4 | 16.9 | 11.2 | 4.5 |
| C.W. | 67.4 | 18.3 | 12.5 | 1.8 |
| S.C.W. | 80.6 | 16.6 | 1.2 | 1.5 |
| C.D.O. | 74.2 | 19.2 | 3.8 | 2.8 |
| All | 70.4 | 17.6 | 9.4 | 2.7 |

Table 6:13 - Distribution of contact time with Social Work Staff (presented as a percentage of contact time in that category) by sample strata

| | C.W. & S.W. Staff | S.W. Staff only | C.W.'s, S.W.'s & Comm. Members | S.W.'s & Comm. Members |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| C.W.A. | 33.8 | 45.5 | 9.0 | 11.6 |
| C.W. | 40.5 | 52.0 | 4.0 | 3.4 |
| S.C.W. | 45.5 | 46.1 | 4.2 | 4.2 |
| C.D.O. | 27.9 | 65.4 | 4.0 | 2.7 |
| All | 35.5 | 53.5 | 5.4 | 5.6 |

As the later discussion of the findings of the final interviews shows, the workers held generally very negative attitudes to their employing department, and generally did not value their contacts with their social work colleagues.

In relation to the pattern of contacts with other agencies (Table 6.14), though 18.9% of contact time is spent with these workers, it should be noted that a wide variety of agencies both statutory and non-statutory may be involved. Overall, 68% of time spent with other agencies is solely with other professional workers and this rises to over 75% for the two more senior groups. Contact with Community Education Department workers is not extensive though its level rises with seniority. Over half of these contacts occur in the other pre-planned category indicating that they have specific purposes but tend not to be part of on-going interactions. The level of pre-planned contact again rises with seniority. At a field level, contact with community education staff is as likely to be incidental as planned.

The results indicate that contact with other statutory agencies (other than community work ones) are with service departments of local, or central government and for specific purposes rather than part of an on-going programme of contacts. They account for 4.5% of contact time.

Contacts with another agency in combination with members of the community accounts for 4.6% of contact time. It appears that the involvement of these agencies in community group meetings is occasional rather than a regular feature of their activities.

Table 6:14 - Distribution of contact time with staff of other agencies (presented as a percentage of contact time in that category) by sample strata

| | Comm. Ed. Workers | Other Stat. C.W.'s | Other stat. non. C.W. Staff | Non stat. Agency Staff | More than 1 stat. or non-stat. agency | Comm. members & other agency | Politicians & other agency | Politicians, other agency & Comn. Mbrs. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| C.W.A. | 14.7 | | 35.6 | 10.9 | 7.4 | 24.5 | 2.6 | |
| C.W. | 12.3 | 4.6 | 20.4 | 11.2 | 10.8 | 30.3 | 5.6 | 4.5 |
| S.C.W. | 11.8 | 4.8 | 11.9 | 22.9 | 28.6 | 13.4 | | 11.3 |
| C.D.O. | 16.4 | | 22.6 | 14.7 | 22.9 | 14.2 | 4.3 | 4.4 |
| All | 13.5 | 0.6 | 23.9 | 13.1 | 13.9 | 24.1 | 3.9 | 4.1 |

3. Community contacts

Whilst overall 41.8% of contact time is spent with members of the community, (Table 6.15) the variations between the sample strata are substantial. Community Development Organisers and Senior Community Workers spend just 15.6% and 22.1% of contact time respectively compared with 45.9% and 50.7% for Community Workers and Community Work Assistants. Approximately 60% of this time is spent with community group members outwith contact with other groups and the most common context is non-statutory, non-social group meetings. Community Development Organisers spend the highest proportion of their time with community groups members in the formal meetings of their groups. The other three groups are all much more prone to unplanned contacts. Contacts with ordinary members of the community, as against members of community groups, represent just 5.9% of contact time compared with 25% for the latter. This suggests that most community work staff maintain fairly regular contact with a limited number of people active in their communities rather than contacts with a wide range of community members. Given that the most common context for these contacts is the category; unplanned contact, this implication is further reinforced. Almost all home visits are accounted for by contacts with ordinary members of the community.

Of the combination categories involving community members, the most common at 4.6% of contact time overall is contact with community members and other agencies. Approximately half of these contacts took place in community group meetings and a further third were in the other pre-planned category.

Table 6.15 Distribution of contact time with members of the Community (presented as a percentage of contact time in that category) by sample strata.

| | Comm. Grp. Memb. only. | Ord. Comm. Membs. only. | Comm. Grp. & Ord. Comm Membs. | Politicians & Comm. Membs. | C.W.'s & Comm. Membs. | C.W.'s, S.W.'s & Comm. Membs. | S.W.'s & Comm. Membs. | Comm. Membs. & other agcy. | Polticians, other Agcy. & Comm Membs. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| C.W.A. | 64.2 | 16.2 | 1.3 | 0.8 | 5.0 | 2.0 | 2.6 | 7.8 | - |
| C.W. | 60.9 | 13.4 | 1.3 | 1.4 | 8.7 | 1.0 | 0.9 | 12.0 | 1.8 |
| S.C.W. | 48. 2 | 9.0 | - | 2.8 | 2.2 | 2.6 | 2.6 | 17.6 | 14.9 |
| C.D.O. | 43.2 | 10.2 | - | - | 9.5 | 6.8 | 4.6 | 19.6 | 6.1 |
| All | 60.8 | 14.2 | 1.2 | 1.1 | 6.2 | 1.8 | 1.8 | 10.9 | 1.9 |

Comment on patterns of contact

It has already been noted that the general patterns of time spent in contact with the other parties to the community work process by each designation of worker is highly consistent with their job descriptions. In this sense the findings are also unsurprising when broken down in more detail in relation to particular categories of activity. They do, however, reinforce the comments made in relation to the findings on the location of the workers, for they indicate clearly that the Community Workers and Community Work Assistants carry the primary role as fieldworkers and that in carrying this role they are substantially more organisationally distanced from their sponsoring agency than the Seniors and Community Development Organisers. The influence of the community contacts in the unplanned areas of activity demonstrates the 'front line' nature of their location as does the extensiveness of community contacts in the non-statutory group meetings.

The fieldworkers pattern of contacts provides a basis for understanding why workers often express their frustrations over the role strains that they experience in community work. On the one hand they feel subject to the bureaucratic authority of their employers whilst on the other they feel a sense of loyalty to the communities with whom they are engaged in attempts to resolve problems. This is a tension that has been endemic to community work, though community workers should guard against the illusion that their occupation is unique in this regard. Teachers, for example, who wish to respond to educational needs as defined by students, may be constrained by the demands of a pre-formed curriculum. The tension between loyalty and accountability is nonetheless a central dilemma for community work and this is

demonstrated by the comments given by these respondents about their work which are discussed in the next section.

It is often presumed that the role strain experienced by community workers reflects a tension between radical community aspirations and conservative employment agencies. Certainly this is not unusual as the history of the Community Development Projects illustrated, but the tension can arise for other reasons not least the radical expectations placed on workers who operate with conservative communities. Often the tension is about the pace of change. Sponsors may expect concrete results in short time scales because they fail to recognise the difficulties involved in generating activity in communities which may have reached a point of conditioned helplessness as a result of the persistent intractability of the problems they face. In this regard the low level of planned and purposeful contact which Community Workers and Community Work Assistants appear to have with politicians is of concern in that a more active dialogue might reduce the degree to which conflict is experienced. It is important to acknowledge here that Strathclyde Region does recognise the problems in its policy statements on community work, though the meaning of some of the statements remains ambiguous until tested in specific situations. In its policy review of community work in 1978,[3] for example, it stated:

> "Each community worker has to make his own honest decision about how he maintains loyalty to his employer, loyalty to the community in which he works and his own self respect"

and later that those selecting community workers should:

> "attempt to ensure that those selected are mature enough in philosophy to challenge the system while living within its constraints."

The simultaneous pressures of community and sponsors interests indicate the importance for community workers of good communication, negotiation, brokerage and advocacy skills and the need for qualities of resilience, tenacity, patience, self-reliance and openness. Community workers, even if they spend little time in direct contact with polticians, operate constantly in a politically dynamic environment.

The discussion so far has concentrated on the position of the more field oriented staff, but it is also the case that Seniors and Community Development Organisers may experience some of the same tensions though from a different position. If they are to carry their managerial and supervisory functions effectively, they must do so with full recognition of the dilemmas which face those whom they supervise. Thus, though they may spend much higher proportions of their time working with their community work and social work colleagues, many of the same accountability and loyalty issues arise. These are likely to be exacerbated for the Community Development Organisers in that they are expected to carry social planning functions which are based as much on normative or comparative definitions of need as the expressed needs of the communities affected. Thus they may manage workers whose reference points for defining appropriate action may not necessarily be compatible with their own. They embody the tension between externally and internally defined priorities for communities within their job description.

Summary of Findings

Examining the locations from which the workers operate, the most notable feature is the complicated variety of work bases. 27% operated

from area social work teams and 30% from community development teams at a District level. Most of the latter were located in District social work headquarters. 16% operated from Special Projects or Area Initiatives and 20% from community flats or their equivalent. All the Community Development Organisers were located in District headquarters but their degree of contact with their staff varied enormously depending where the latter were located. 37% of workers (entirely made up of Community Workers and Community Work Assistants) also operated from another base, most usually community flat. Only 11% of workers were not located with at least one other community work colleague, Community Development Organisers being more likely to be isolated than their colleagues. Overall, 50% of workers operated alongside three or less colleagues and 50%, three or more. Community Work Assistants are more likely to be part of smaller groups.

The complex pattern of work locations no doubt contributed to the complex picture of lines of accountability as understood by the workers. Community Development Organisers all saw themselves as accountable to District Managers, Seniors generally worked to Community Development Organisers, though one related primarily to an Area Officer. Community Workers most commonly saw themselves as accountable to the Community Development Organiser or Senior Community Worker, but Area Officers, Project Leaders and District Managers also figured. Interestingly, only one Community Work Assistant saw himself as primarily accountable to the Community Development Organiser alone, accountability to Senior Community Workers or Community Workers being more common.

Information on location of workers suggests that 78% could have been expected to be in contact with other social work staff as a result of

the location of their work place. Few were in settings where they were located with other professional agencies related to community work.

In relation to the networks of people involved in contact activities, the most substantial level of contact overall, and especially for Community Development Organisers and Senior Community Workers, is with other professional workers, followed by members of the community. Contacts with politicians are generally quite limited. Contacts with other professional workers show those involving other Social Work Department community workers to be the most common, followed by those with staff of other agencies and finally those with other Social Work Department staff. Most contact with members of the community is undertaken by Community Workers and Community Work Assistants and these contacts are predominantly with members of community groups.

This overall patterns holds in relation to the major contact activities discussed in Chapter 5, though in analysis of the category non statutory groups (non-social) the breakdown by sample strata clearly reveals a very much greater disposition on the part of Community Work Assistants and Community Workers to contacts with members of the community and for Senior Community Workers and especially Community Development Organisers a heavier weighting towards contacts with other professional workers.

In relation to contacts with other social work staff, the analysis reveals that Community Workers and Community Work Assistants are regularly in contact with their colleagues as a result of the organisational requirements of their agency, but this does not appear to lead to high levels of collaborative work. With the more senior groups

of workers there is a greater likelihood of the contacts being planned with specific purposes.

The greater level of planned as against unplanned contact between Seniors and Community Development Organisers and other community development staff is indicative of their managerial roles in relation to the two more junior strata of the sample.

In relation to contact with other agencies, this is not particularly extensive or consistent with other community work agencies, especially community education, and appears to relate more to other local authority or central government service agencies.

Overall, the time spent in contact with politicians is small and a high proportion of this is in contexts where others are involved. Little time appears to be spent either monitoring the political process or promoting dialogue with politicians on community work matters.

References

1. Smith, G., 'Social Work and the Sociology or Organisations', Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1970.

2. Director of Social Work, 'Helping the community to organise', Strathclyde Regional Council, 1984.

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# PART IV

## Workers' views on their practice

# Chapter 7

## Community workers' aspirations for, and evaluation of, their work

### Introduction

Whilst so far we have concentrated on the evidence in relation to the work that community workers actually do, it is of equal importance to understand what it is that they wish to achieve by this activity and how they evaluate the work they have done relative to these aspirations. The discussion so far provides a basis for assessing whether what the workers spend their time doing fulfils their aspirations and whether there is a degree of dissonance between how time is actually used and the ways in which workers might wish to use it. To use the words of Harry Specht,[1] are community workers activities characterised by 'large hopes but small realities'?

In order to explore these questions, the evidence on which this chapter is based is drawn from the answers given by respondents to questions 1 and 5 in the final interview schedule (see Appendix 3). The first question asked directly: "what do you hope your community work will achieve?" The question was deliberately located at the beginning of the interview to ensure that the workers were free to comment openly and without influence from reflection on the actual work undertaken in the recorded month which was a requirement of later questions. The approach to the understanding of this information was first to examine the comments recorded from the interviews and categorise them into groups reflecting similar qualitative responses. In order to quantify and hence rank the significance of different aspirations, the number of comments in each category was calculated as a

percentage of the total number of comments made in relation to the questions. The percentage of workers making comments in each category was also calculated.

Whereas question 1 explored aspirations in the abstract, question 5 concentrated on exploration of the work that the respondents had actually recorded. The first part of the question asked them to reflect on this work and consider: "what aspects of your work during the recorded month do you value most highly in relation to the objectives identified in question 1?" The second part asked them to identify those which they valued least. The procedure for the analysis of this data was the same as for the first question.

In relation to both questions, the researcher was interested to discover to what degree there might be differences of aspiration and evaluation between the different sample strata and between workers around the variables of sex, age, work location and professional qualification. To compare the results in relation to these variables, the overall rank order of comment categories was compared with that for each sample strata and in relation to the other variables. Given the small size of the sample, in relation to age, work location and qualification, it has been divided into two sub groups in each case. The attitudes of those above and below the mean age of thirty-two years have been compared, whilst in relation to location those sharing office premises with social work colleagues have been compared with those who do not. In relation to professional qualification, only those holding such qualifications have been included and the comparison is between those holding the Certificate of Qualification in Social Work as against the range of other qualifications recognised for community work

employment by Strathclyde Region. In practice, the latter group is almost entirely made up of people with youth and community work/community education qualifications (see Table 4.4).

Workers aspirations for their practice

Considering what the workers hoped their work would achieve, there was very little variation in response between the sample strata. Employing typical phrases used, the most popular comment category reflecting comments of 44% of the sample, focussed on: 'the identification of local issues and promotion of organisations of the community to make their own responses and achieve change. In so doing to increase the confidence, self esteem, independence, knowledge and skill of local community members'. This might be offered by many workers as a definition of classical community development work as much as a definition of their own personal hopes for achievement. It emphasises the role of the worker in promoting organisational mechanisms within the community by which it may address its problems and move into a self-sustaining process of change and development based on the growth of confidence and knowledge in community groups.

The second category representing 37% of the sample, though similar to the first, is distinguished from it by its emphasis on personal growth of individual community members which enables them as individuals rather than as members of community groups to tackle their problems more effectively. It reads: 'Spread skills, knowledge, information and self belief to individuals in the locality to assist them in relating to the system, facing their problems, participating in decisions, obtaining their rights.'

The third category borrows from the first two but here the emphasis is on establishing control over events rather than simply influencing them. In other words, it is a variation in degree rather than direction. Comments in this category relate both to control by people of their own lives and collectively over the life of the communities of which they are part. Typical phrases employed were: 'Promote local control/self sufficiency/self determination by people in relation to their own lives and communities.' The comment is made by 20% of the sample.

The next most popular cluster of comments made by 19% of the sample formed a composite group containing a range of rather general aspirations for improved conditions in the communities in which the workers operate. Some such as: 'help area receive a good service from social work and other agencies' are more specific than others such as: 'improve the quality of life'. However, their binding feature is their generality combined with lack of reference to the process by which these ends will be achieved. Community Work Assistants predominate in this category.

By fifth place in the rank order of groups of comments (13% of sample) there was still an emphasis on changes within the areas in which the workers operated though only one of the two categories sharing this position was of this nature and it focussed on changes in the people themselves rather than their conditions. The emphasis is on assistance to local people in developing a political awareness of the nature and causes of their problems. Hence, phrases like: 'politicise people', 'educate people about the political system' and 'help people relate local experience to wider causal explanations'. These aspirations, like those in the third ranked category express an essentially radical

approach to community work which one would expect to be favoured by those employing the term: community action, to describe their work.

The other fifth ranked category, by contrast with the preceeding ones, concentrates on the understanding of community issues held by agencies which deliver services or have potential influence over events in the area in which the worker operates. The following is a paraphrase of respondents comments: 'Create awareness of community issues in other agencies, especially the local authority which relates to the activity. In so doing, illustrate the inadequacies of their approach and the legitimacy of community groups.'

The seventh ranked category, contributed to by 11% of the sample, is again area focussed but stresses the importance of consensual values through which the community develops a more integrated sense of purpose which expresses itself in mutual caring. The emphasis is on the community as a resource to help the vulnerable and disadvantaged and on the process of providing a preventive strategy to combat social distress. Hence, comments like: 'to promote caring and integration in the community which responds to its needs' and 'a preventive approach to groups in the community, e.g. the elderly'.

These comments suggest more conservative models of community work intervention in that they focus on the integration of people within communities and on the use of the communities own resources to meet its needs. They place correspondingly less emphasis on changing the external conditions which may affect the community and hence suggest less attention to inequality as an issue. It is important to acknowledge, however, that such aspirations may be placed alongside others which address these external conditions and may therefore reflect

a theoretical eclecticism in which community problems are seen as emanating both from internal and external factors.

The eighth category representing comments by 9% of the sample, is distinctive in its orientation to quite specific change in material terms, arising from the community workers' activities. Some of the comments are similar to those in the fourth ranked category, but it tends to equate improvement with redistribution of resources and income and with measurable improvemement in the standard of living. Hence comments like: 'to achieve redistribution of resources for those suffering inequality', 'achieve a decent standard of living by tackling housing, environment, welfare rights and employment issues'.

Though only representing the comments of four workers, the emphasis of the ninth ranked category on participative approaches both to the delivery of local government services and to the processes of decision making about the locality, reflects a style of work central to the Strathclyde Region community development and multiple deprivation strategies.

Beyond this point in the rank order of comment categories, groups represent the comments of three or less workers. The top nine ranked categories account for 75.2% of the comments made. Within the remaining comments only five specifically identify their agency as a target for change and this relates to the establishment of community work principles as a basis for its operation. Only three comments relate to the personal development of the workers themselves.

Overall, the findings in relation to the aspirations of the workers for their own work lay an extremely heavy emphasis on changes within the communities in which they work. 73.6% of the comments made focus in this

way, whereas 14.4% focus on change in the outlook and practices of public service agencies.

Despite the predominant trend towards influencing the community, there are some significant variations in value stance which are implicit in the comments. A breakdown of the comment categories into those reflecting radical, moderate and conservative orientations towards community work practice indicates that 16% could be said to be associated with the radical or community action school, 51% with the moderate or community development school and 7% with the conservative community care/integration school.

This pattern of distribution of aspirations for their work is of particular interest when related back to the actual nature of their practice as described in Chapter 5 and the pattern of work contacts as described in Chapter 6. In relation to the content of their work the workers hopes do not seem grossly unrelated to the realities of their practice. The emphasis in practice on resource work and the provision of community premises, facilities and amenities can be seen as related to the objectives of neighbourhood community development indicated by the above analysis. The low level of campaigning work identified from the workers recordings would also appear to correlate with the relatively low level of radical aspirations. The limited emphasis on engagement with local authority policy processes also seems to be consistent with the relatively low level of aspiration to influence the local authority especially the Social Work Department.

Considering the contact networks involved in their activities, the extensive levels of contact with members of the community, particularly community group members, among Community Work Assistant and Community

Workers, also appear consistent with the community focussed aspirations for their work. Though contact with other professional workers was actually greater in terms of time, later material on the ways in which workers value these contacts will suggest that they are much less significant to the workers.

In terms of the overall aspirations for their work in relation to the variables identified in the introduction to the chapter, there are few major differences in the way in which sub groups rank their comments (see Table 7.1). Some, however, are worthy of note. In relation to the eighth ranked overall category, those operating from non-social work locations rank this at place three and those with social work qualifications at place two, though it is difficult to see why these two groups should value material changes more highly than their colleagues. In relation to the joint fifth ranked category concerned with the aspiration to influence the attitudes of service delivery agencies, women rank this in eighth place but men in third, whilst older workers also rank it eighth but young workers fourth. This suggests that younger and male workers may have a higher propensity to an organisational orientation to their practice. The only other significant variations occur in relation to the fourth ranked catgegory which men and older workers rank much lower but this is such an unspecific catgegory that little significance should be attached to it.

Workers evaluations of their practice relative to their aspirations

(a) Positive aspects

Turning to their evaluation of the work that they actually undertook as revealed in responses to question five of the final interview

Table 7.1 Relative rank order of aspirations for their work by age, sex, work location and professional qualifications.

| | Rank Orders | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Work Location | | Age | | Sex | | Professional qualification | |
| Category | All | S.W. | Non-S.W. | Older | Younger | M | F | CQSW | Non-CQSW |
| Identification of local issues | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 1 |
| Personal growth of community members | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 |
| Establish local control | 3 | 3 | 5 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 3 |
| Generally improve conditions | 4 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 7 | 3 | 3 | 8 |
| Develop pol. awareness | 5 | 5 | 5 | 6 | 6 | 5 | 6 | 6 | 4 |
| Awareness of other agencies | 5 | 5 | 5 | 8 | 4 | 3 | 8 | 6 | 4 |
| Promote community care | 7 | 5 | 8 | 5 | 8 | 7 | 5 | - | 6 |
| Material resource change | 8 | 8 | 3 | 8 | 7 | 6 | 7 | 2 | 7 |

schedule, those aspects which the workers regarded positively will be examined first. Table 7.2 places the category headings in rank order for each strata of the sample up to place nine for the Community Work Assistants, Community Workers and sample a whole, but to place four for the two smaller groups of workers. Examining the overall responses of the sample, the most valued activity is: general work with community groups. This is a residual category for work with groups whose type is not clearly specified. Some of the comments simply indicate that the contact with the group itself is what is valued, but most go on to indicate the nature of the workers role. For most it is sufficient that their roles sustain and support the groups to be effective in their own terms, though occasionally comments such as: 'Assisting groups to recognise wider causes of their problems', imply a more directive role on the part of the worker. Typical valued activities are: 'Rebuilding group confidence and organisation': 'Providing information to groups and making general contact': 'Sustaining enthusiasm in community groups': 'Assisting the community to have more control over resources through individual and group development'.

Almost 30% of the sample indicate that the general role of working with community groups is highly valued. When added together with all the categories specifying work with particular groups, the value that workers attach to their direct support roles is further emphasised. Adding together the comments and categories which relate to work with community groups, we find that they include 42.6% of all comments made. The second largest composite group would be work with other local government officers which combined represents 22.2% of the comments.

Table 7.2 Rank order of valued activity categories by sample strata

| | CWA | CW | SCW | CDO | All |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Community care & service schemes. | Work with forum of community groups. | Work with other Comm.Dev.staff. | Work with other Comm.Dev.staff. | General work with community groups. |
| 2 | (IT/Youth or (children's work. | (General work with (community groups. | General work with comm.groups. | Corporate working. | Work with other Comm.Dev. staff. |
| 3 | ( (Advice and infor- (mation work. | ( (Work on housing (campaigns. | (Corporate (working. | (Work with Social (Work management. | Work with forum of community groups. |
| 4 | Work with Tenants Associations. | Work with Tenants Association. | ( (Work with the (unemployed. | ( (General work with (community groups. | Work with Tenants Associations. |
| 5 | General work with community groups. | (Work with other (Comm.Dev.staff. | | | (Work with housing (campaigns. |
| 6 | (Work with forum (of comm.groups. | ( (Corporate (working. | | | ( (Community care and (service schemes. |
| 7 | ( (Work with housing (campaigns. | ( (Work with the (unemployed. | | | (Corporate (working. |
| 8 | (Work with (volunteer groups. | (Work with indiv- (idual activists. | | | (IT/Youth or (children's work. |
| 9 | ( (Influence on Dist. (or Reg.Council. | ( (Work with SW's. (non-managerial) | | | ( (Advice and information (work. |

Second in the rank order overall comes work with other community development staff. This represents 8.4% of the comments and is commented on by almost 26% of the sample. No less than eight of the fourteen comments in the category relate to supervision though it is not always clear whether it is the giving or the receiving of supervision or both that is valued, though the majority of the comments coming from Community Development Organisers and Seniors suggests the first. The high ranking of work with colleagues is an interesting reflection relative to the findings of the first questionnaire which showed that only 50% of the sample were located with more than two other colleagues. However, it would appear to be consistent with the patterns of contact as identified in Chapter 6 from the network analysis. Typical comments in this category included value attached to: 'Formal and informal discussions and meetings especially with the Senior': 'Supervision': 'Supervision and informal and formal meetings and information sharing': 'Support to Community Workers and Community Work Assistants:Supervision of community work student': 'Team meetings, staff support and supervision': 'Breaking in new community worker'.

The third ranked category has already been noted as belonging to a composite group of categories relating to work with community groups but it is interesting in its emphasis not on work with a particular group, but with amalgamations of groups. Collaboration between community groups is often cited as desirable if community work is to escape from entirely parochial perspectives and clearly a substantial group (22.2%) in the sample share this value. Nonetheless, recordings do not indicate that this is a particularly extensive activity amongst workers. Typical comments as to the valued activities include: 'Getting two Tenants

Associations and the Community Council to work together': 'Working to link groups': 'Working with four groups in combined action group for community premises'.

Work with tenants associations is ranked next overall and is followed by work on housing campaigns. It is worth noting that four of the eight comments in the former actually relate to housing issues whilst the others are of a more general nature. Where not specified, it is more than likely that many of the aspects of work listed in relation to housing campaigns are, in fact, with tenants associations. Typical of comments in the former category are: 'To get policy implemented and consider new courses of action for influence over District Housing Department': 'To organise the opening of a community hall': 'Work on improvement and repairs campaign': To open community cafe by getting District Council to let premises': 'Work with Health Board tenants to get rent books and advice'.

Comments relating to housing campaigns as suggested are similar, for example: 'Work on the rents campaign': 'Work on a rates campaign': 'Meeting the Shelter group and its associated public meeting': 'Work on the dampness campaign'.

Ranked in equal fifth place alongside work with housing campaigns are two rather different kinds of aspects of work, cited by 18.5% of the sample respectively. One concerns the establishment of community care schemes, the other corporate working. In the former, it should be noted that quite a broad range of groups is served: the elderly, mothers and toddlers, alcoholics and the handicapped. For example: 'Work with mother and toddler group integrating the handicapped': 'Self help alcoholism group and involvement in Wintercare': 'Work with blind

group to achieve independence': Work with disabled group on access problems'.

The relatively high ranking of corporate working may be encouraging to observers of the community work scene who have felt that isolationism amongst workers in different departments has been a problematic characteristic of practice. The desire for collaboration appears to extend to a range of departments both in Region and District and not to be limimted purely to those also employing community workers. The extent of this kind of activity, as revealed in the time budget analysis of workers recording, is not extensive however.

Examples of types of corporate working which were valued included: 'Presentation on housing issues to other departmental workers operating in the area': 'Meeting and follow-up meeting between community work staff of several departments dealing with the corporate approach to work especially on housing': 'Work with other departments - leisures and recreation, further education etc. recognising we are not the only people in the field doing community work'.

Ranked equal eighth are: intermediate treatment, youth and childrens work and advice and information work, whilst in tenth place comes work with the unemployed.

It is perhaps not surprising given negative attitudes to the Social Work Department, discussed in Chapter 8 that working with social work colleagues ranks only eleventh representing 3% of the comments but perhaps more surprising that work with individual activists is ranked in the same position. Again the placing of work with social work management in thirteenth position is also predictable.

When looking at the lower ranked categories the significance often varies according to the number of workers who actually engage in that particular kind of work. Few workers in Strathclyde, for example, operate in substantially racially mixed areas and such categories as work with ethnic minorities could not be expected to score highly. Others, however, such as information gathering and research work, or written work and report preparation would be more common but do not appear to be highly valued nor were they extensive in the time budget figures. The almost complete absence of references to work with politicians is of particular interest and bears out findings from the network analysis.

Perhaps the most interesting feature of the answers to Question 5A is the variation between the strata of the sample and in relation to the other four variables examined. There are several striking features of this comparison of sample strata. Firstly, the similarity of the Community Development Organisers and Seniors by contrast with the other groups. Both these groups appear to value work with their community development colleagues and corporate working with other departments more highly. The former suggests perhaps, that managing/supervising is more highly valued than being managed or supervised. The latter probably reflects the greater level of involvement in corporate working identified in Chapter 5 for Community Development Organisers. Though both of these categories still score in the top nine for the Community Workers, neither of them does so for the Community Work Assistants. It is noteable too, that only the Community Development Organisers appear to value work with management highly. It is interesting to hypothesise as to whether the activities valued by Community Development Organisers

and Seniors are a reflection of the roles they perform or whether it is the valuing of these kinds of activities which has assisted them to gain the more senior posts.

Also of interest, is the fact that it is the Community Workers who account for a substantially greater part of those categories of activity concerned with direct contact with community groups. The first four of those priorities being for work of this kind. By contrast the Community Work Assistants appear to value more highly, work of a service providing nature as illustrated by the ranking of: community care, work with youth and children, and advice and information work, in the first three places. Again, it is difficult to know whether the roles these workers are expected to perform have influenced their values, or vice versa. Nontheless, it does suggest a substantially different orientation between Community Workers and Community Work Assistants. These findings can be interestingly compared with the time budget analysis of workers' recordings both in relation to their pattern of activities and the contacts involved in them. For example, the findings on supervision correlate with the much more extensive time involved in this by Community Development Organisers and Seniors, whilst the findings on corporate working correlate both with the content analysis and the analysis of networks of contact in which both Community Development Organisers and Seniors were shown to spend far more time in contact with workers from other agencies. The valuing by Community Workers of their direct contacts with the community and the valuing of community care activity by Community Work Assistants are consistent with the network and content analyses respectively.

Moving to the other variables (see Table 7.3), there are some interesting differences of emphasis. In relation to sex, women appear to value work with other community development staff less than their male colleagues ranking it sixth as against second. Similarly they place much greater value on community care activities ranking these in first place as against ninth for men. These findings are clearly linked to the relatively high proportion of women in the Community Work Assistant group which also values these activities in the same way. Women appear to value housing campaigns more highly than men, but men work with tenants associations. However, as has been noted, the content of these activities is actually very similar, so little should be made of the difference. Women also appear to value corporate working and intermediate treatment youth and childrens work more highly than their male colleagues ranking each at place three as against seven and eight respectively. The latter is again correlated with the Community Work Assistants group. Women also value collaborative work between community groups less.

Age appears to be a less influential variable than sex, though there are some interesting differences. Older workers place work on housing campaigns ninth as against second for their younger colleagues, but are more positively disposed to corporate working ranking it second as against ninth for younger workers. Younger workers are more positive about advice and information work ranking it third as against ninth and less so about work with the unemployed which they place ninth as against fifth for their older colleagues. Whether these differences in outlook are actually related to age in a causal way is difficult to interpret, but it might be suggested that there is a slightly more radical trend in

Table 7.3 Relative rank order of valued activities by age, sex, work location and professional qualifications.

| | Rank Orders | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Work Location | | Age | | Sex | | Professional qualification | |
| Category | All | S.W. | Non-S.W. | Older | Younger | M | F | CQSW | Non-CQSW |
| General work with community groups. | 1 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 5 | 1 | 2 |
| Work with other community dev.staff. | 2 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 6 | 2 | 1 |
| Work with Forum of community groups. | 3 | 7 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 7 | 2 | 6 |
| Work with tenants' associations. | 4 | 3 | 5 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 7 | 4 | 7 |
| Work with housing campaigns. | 5 | 2 | 10 | 9 | 2 | 9 | 1 | 6 | 4 |
| Community care and service schemes. | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 3 | 9 | 1 | 6 | 10 |
| Corporate working | 5 | 5 | 5 | 2 | 9 | 7 | 3 | 5 | 2 |
| IT/Youth or children's work. | 8 | 10 | 4 | 5 | 8 | 8 | 3 | - | 7 |
| Advice and information work. | 8 | 7 | 5 | 9 | 3 | 5 | 7 | - | 7 |

the younger worker group, however, this may as much be related to the fact that the Community Worker group is slightly younger on average and would therefore influence these findings.

The influence on practice evaluation of common location with social work colleagues or its absence is also difficult to assess. Variations between the two groups occur in three categories. Those commonly located with social work staff rank collaborative work between community groups lower than their colleagues at place seven as against one. They value housing campaigns more highly, however, at place two as against ten. On the other hand those not located with other social work staff value IT, youth and childrens work more highly than their colleagues at place four as against ten. A possible explanation for the latter two differences could be that many of those not located with social work colleagues are in local community flats used by the local community for the running of activity groups as well as campaigning groups. Those not located in such a setting may therefore be less directly involved in the service as against campaign types of activity.

Relative types of professional qualification produce some findings which may indicate that this has some influence. Social work qualified staff, for example, rank community care more highly than their colleagues who, possibly influenced by youth and community work training score more highly in relation to intermediate treatment, childrens and youth work. Apart from CQSW staff appearing to value collaborative work between community groups more highly, however, there are more similarities than differences between the two groups. Indeed, in terms of qualifications, type of qualification appears to be much less significant than whether workers are qualified at all which is revealed

by comparing the Community Work Assistants profile with the other groups of workers.

Generally, job designation appears to be a much more significant factor than the other variables examined.

Workers' evaluations of their practice in relation to their aspirations

(b) Negative aspects

As Table 7.4 demonstrates, there is considerable variation between sample strata in relation to non-valued activities though there are also common patterns. It is perhaps predictable that administration should be the least valued activity being cited by 33% of the sample and representing 17.6% of the comments. No doubt much of it is necessary, but few workers of any kind can value time spent in this way. The kinds of activity provoking the frustration are illustrateed in the comments made. They refer, for example, to: 'Expenses forms etc.': 'Calculating unsocial hours etc.': 'Photocopying and distributing information': 'Completing monthly returns': 'Monitoring irregular hours': 'Administration generally': 'Time sheets and internal social work administration (note well: not work for community groups)': 'Administration for the community flat': 'Publicity for a conference'.

Apparently more significantly, however, given the emphasis on this in professional training, is the low ranking given to written work, report preparation and recording which is indicated by 22.2% of the sample. However, close examination shows that at least part of half of the comments in this category relate to undertaking the recording work for this research project which, the researcher will be the first to acknowledge, must have been an onerous task. If these comments are

Table 7.4 Rank order of non-valued activity categories by sample strata.

| | CWA | CW | SCW | CDO | All |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Work with other community dev.staff. | Admin. & clerical work. | Corporate Working | Admin. & clerical work. | Admin. & Clerical work. |
| 2 | Corporate working | Written work - reports and recording. | Admin. & clerical work. | Community care & service schemes. | Written work - reports and recording. |
| 3 | Work with the unemployed. | Work with SW's. (non-managerial) | Travelling time. | | (Work with other (community dev.staff ( |
| 4 | Written work - reports and recording. | Work with S.W. management. | | | (Work with SW's. ((non-managerial) ( |
| 5 | Advice and information work. | Odd obligements. | | | (Work with S.W. (management. |
| 6 | Training | Advice and information work. | | | Odd obligements. |
| 7 | Odd obligements | Corporate Working. | | | Corporate Working |
| 8 | | Training | | | Advice and information work. |

excluded this category would drop to ninth in the rank order. With this adjustment the placing of the category work with other community development staff, in third equal position, achieves even more significance than otherwise. Whilst the ranking of administration was predictable, this was not, especially given that the same category was ranked in second place in relation to valued activities. As is noted later, however, by far the largest group in this category are Community Work Assistants who did not value the activity highly. Typical examples of comments in this category are: 'Team meetings': 'Community Development Section Meetings are of no value': 'Community Development Team Meetings': 'Time spent supporting new Community Work Assistants': 'Time spent looking for support and supervision from the Community Development Organiser who is not available': 'Community Work Management Meetings a waste of time'.

The other two categories ranked in equal third place were to be anticipated. These were - work with social work colleagues and work with social work management. In relation to the former, all but two make specific reference in part at least to attending social work team meetings. The significance of this negative comment is amplified by reference to Table 6.2 in the commentary on organisational characteristics which shows that 64% of workers would expect substantial regular working contact with social workers as a result of their location and by reference to the network analysis which showed 13.7% of contact time to be spent with other Social Work Department staff. On the other hand, since all workers are employed within the social work department, they would necessarily expect some relationship with social work managers. However, these contacts do not appear to be generally

valued. Within the category there is an interesting emphasis on frustration in dealing with Urban Aid slippage and other aspects of funding, for example, from section 10 of the Social Work Scotland Act, which occur in half the comments. This may suggest that though the content analysis, which employed the same categories as in this section, showed extensive involvement in resource work, it is not necessarily a highly valued activity though it is not specifically identified extensively as a low value activity. Typical comments on work with social work management were: 'Demands of Urban Aid slippage and applications for neighbourhood unit': 'Advice which is out of touch with local needs': 'Anything to do with the Social Work Department management': 'Meetings are unstructured and a waste of time'.

In sixth place in the overall rank order comes the residual category entitled "odd obligements", which contains a fascinating illustration of the trivial and mundane tasks which are part of being a community worker. The impression gained from the comments was not that workers regarded these as unnecessary, but that they were a source of frustration because they distracted energy from what were seen as more central tasks. Examples from the workers comments are: 'Odd obligements such as going to the cash and carry': 'Organising insurance, transport for outings, etc.': 'Small unimportant things, e.g. visiting OAP to collect books and silver paper, tidying the community flat, organising the mini bus, etc.': 'Cleaning the community flat': 'Delivering projector, providing transport for meetings': 'Running around, e.g. getting equipment'.

Seventh position is occupied by another category relating to relationships with professional colleagues - corporate working.

Indeed, categories of this nature represent 37% of the comments made and occupy four of the first seven places in the rank order. By contrast, categories concerned with direct work with community groups do not score highly on this list, whereas they predominate in relation to valued activities. Returning to corporate working, it is interesting to note that the criticism of it tends to be relatively specific, indicating not so much a rejection of the approach, but frustration at the particular experience the respondent is having of it.

Examples of comments are: 'Effects of demands for corporate working in Initiative Areas on the freedom for groups to develop and work at their own pace and in their own directions (this is not totally negative)': 'Specifically the value of preparing the area profile with other Departments (note well: other aspects of corporate working are regarded positively)': 'Corporate neighbourhood team meetings in Initiative Area with social work, community education or community work etc.': 'Area Development Team meetings are just a talking shop and not real corporate working'.

In eighth place representing 6.9% of the comments, 13% of the sample, comes information and advice work. Here the frustration appears to reflect the feeling that the time required with individuals is not an appropriate role for community workers who would, by preference, see the problems either tackled by other categories of worker, or through the community groups themselves.

The criticisms of training, which come in ninth place overall, relate to in-service training, three of the comments to training for Community Work Assistants and two of the remaining three to the course on student supervision.

Some comment has already been made on variations between the strata of the sample, however, the general distinction between the patterns for Community Work Assistants relative to the other groups in relation to work with community development colleagues is worthy of particular note. They express little frustration with administration compared with their colleagues. The activity analysis shows that they generally spend a smaller amount of time on it and it is probably less of a requirement of their role anyway.

The low value attached to work with social work colleagues is particularly prevalent for Community Workers whose attitudes largely account for its ranking in second place.

Exploring the findings in relation to the other variables (see Table 7.5), whilst areas like administration and written work are generally agreed not to be highly valued, there are some interesting variations in other areas. Women, for example, rank the category: odd obligements, in first place, whereas men rank it ninth. The content analysis suggests that this is a more common activity for women but their frustration could be related to a greater expectation that women should carry such roles than men. If this is so, it is perhaps surprising that so little attention appears to be given to work on women's issues. Women also express particular frustration about corporate working ranking it second as against ninth for men.

In relation to age, younger workers express a much higher level of dissatisfaction with work with social work colleagues ranking it first as against ninth for older workers. It is somewhat anomolous that in relation to highly valued activity younger workers were much less positive about corporate working than their colleagues, but in relation

Table 7.5 Relative rank order of non-valued activities by age, sex, work location and professional qualifications.

Rank order

| Category | All | Work Location | | Age | | Sex | | Professional qualification | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | S.W. | Non-S.W. | Older | Younger | M | F | CQSW | Non-CQSW |
| Admin. and clerical work. | 1 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| Written work reports and recording. | 2 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 5 | 2 | 5 | 2 | 5 |
| Work with other community dev.staff. | 3 | 5 | 2 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 6 | 4 | 7 |
| Work with SW's. (non-managerial) | 3 | 3 | 3 | 9 | 1 | 5 | 2 | 4 | 2 |
| Work with S.W. management. | 3 | 2 | 7 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 6 | 3 | 3 |
| Odd obligements | 6 | 5 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 9 | 1 | - | 3 |
| Corporate working | 7 | 7 | 3 | 2 | 10 | 7 | 2 | 4 | 5 |
| Advice and information work. | 8 | 7 | 7 | 7 | 8 | 5 | 8 | 4 | 7 |

to non-valued activities rank it much lower than their colleagues at place ten as against two It is probable that the older group which contains a higher proportion of Seniors and Community Development Organisers has more involvement in this type of activity which precipitates more reaction in relation to both the question on valued and non-valued activities.

Interestingly common location with other social work staff, or the lack of it, appears to have no influence on the degree of frustration expressed about work with social work colleagues, though the former group express significantly more frustration about work with social work management ranking it in second as against seventh place. Perhaps physical distance makes management less intrusive. The only other substantial variation in relation to location is the greater level of frustration about corporate working expressed by workers not located in a base in common with social workers. Given that they are commonly operating from relatively isolated settings in community premises, physical distance may again be a factor.

There are only small variations in relation to type of qualification. CQSW holders, though still not valuing their work with social work colleagues, are slightly less frustrated by this than their colleagues ranking it fourth as against second. They are equally negative about social work management. Non-social work qualified staff show a lower level of frustration with work with other community development staff than their colleagues ranking it seventh as against fourth.

Summary

The first question sought to discover what workers hoped their community work would achieve. Responses to the question generally emphasised the promotion of changes within the local community, rather than in wider systems though some of the former might be dependent on the latter. The most popular comments emphasised the role of the worker in promoting organisational mechanisms within the community by which it might address its problems and move into a self sustaining process of change and development based on growth of confidence and knowledge in community groups. Such comments, it can be argued, reflect a classical community development orientation. The second most popular comment group emphasises the personal growth of community members through the process of their activities. Combined, the two most popular categories account for 35% of the comments made. The third most popular category, in emphasising control over events and resources in the area, adopts a more radical stance. There are further more radical categories emphasising political action and education but the general tenor of comments is towards incremental views of change. Less than 10% of the comments made relate to changes in service delivery agencies and less than 3% specifically to changes in social work.

Taking those aspects of their work during the month which they had valued most highly first, overall the most common category is work with other community development staff. Interestingly, this reflects the actual pattern of contacts in the network analysis of worker recordings. Overall, 41.6% of comments relate to work with community groups and 22.2% to work with other professionals. In the former group of categories, it is interesting that almost half the comments seem to be

as concerned with the process of group support itself as with the specific tasks which their activities are designed to accomplish. This suggests that non-directive stances towards community groups are highly valued. That work with networks or forums of community groups form the third most substantial category is in contrast with the parochial orientations thought to be held by community groups themselves (see Chapter 10), and is not extensively reflected in worker recordings. Where the focus of work with groups is specified, housing campaigns are particularly valued. In fifth place in the rank order of categories come community care schemes and corporate working. They are followed by IT, youth and children's work; advice and information work and work with the unemployed.

Overall, the results produce a slightly confusing picture, however, when examined by sample strata, the pattern becomes more clear. Similarities appear between Community Development Organisers and Senior Community Workers compared with the other two groups. They value work with community development colleagues and corporate working particularly highly. Community Development Organisers also appear to value work with management highly. Community Workers are characterised by valuing direct contact with community groups most highly whereas by contrast Community Work Assistants value service provision work more highly. Their placing of community care: IT youth and children's work and advice and information work in the first three places, reinforces the picture emerging from the recordings of Community Work Assistants and Community Workers having contrasting orientations to their work. Women, probably as a result of their higher proportion among Community Work Assistants

and CQSW trained staff value community care activities more highly than their colleagues.

Turning to the aspects of their work that the respondents valued least highly during the recorded month, it is perhaps predictable that administration should be the most common category. However, it is interesting in that it did not prove to be a very extensive activity in the time budgets of the workers. Another non-contact activity: written work, report preparation and recording comes in second place. Admittedly half of the comments relate to the recording for this research project which is understandable, but its general ranking, given that it again was a relatively insubstantial aspect of the time budgets, is of note. Work with other community development staff is in third place alongside work with other social work colleagues and work with social work management. Given the views expressed about social work management attitudes to community work, discussed in Chapter 8, the latter two categories may be understandable, however, work with other community development staff was also ranked the second most valued activity by the workers and was the second largest contact category in the network analysis. By contrast with the highly valued activities very few workers refer to work with community groups.

Other negatively valued aspects of work were corporate working, 'odd obligements', information and advice work and in-service training.

Examined by sample strata, the results in relation to least valued activities show most variation for Community Work Assistants who express little frustration with administration but a substantial level of frustration with work with community development colleagues. Low value is attached by Community Workers, in particular, to work with social

work colleagues by Community Workers, in particular. Women appear frustrated by 'odd obligements' and corporate working. Younger workers are more frustrated by work with social work colleagues, older workers by corporate working. Being located away from other social work staff appears to reduce levels of frustration with social work management. Having a social work qualification, however, seems not to be significantly influential in terms of relationships with social work colleagues or social work management.

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# Chapter 8

## Community workers views of their Social Work Managers

### Introduction

In the discussion of the context of this research in Chapters 1 and 2, it was noted that community work is an activity which is located in a variety of host organisations with much broader overall purposes. Though there have been developments of agencies specifically focussed on community work, in local authorities especially, this is uncommon. In Strathclyde when the community development and deprivation strategies were being planned there was considerable debate as to whether there should be a department of community work, however, this approach was not adopted though a separate Community Development Committee concerned with this activity within the host departments (particularly Education and Social Work) was established. One of the consequences of this decision was that community workers were ultimately managed by staff who generally lacked experience or substantial knowledge of community work. Though a Regional Community Development Organiser was appointed, the organisational structure of the department left him in an advisory role whilst the community work staff was managed through the hierarchy of the five social work divisions.

Given the extensiveness of community work employment in other host departments, the problems of non-specialist management are of general interest, however, the findings are most pertinent to social work and social services departments with significant numbers of community work staff. They are also of relevance in considering the breadth of

training which may be required if non-specialist departments are to be effective hosts to community work. Conversely, the findings indicate the importance of a general understanding of the host setting among the specialist workers. This again has implications for training, both pre-service and in-service.

Since the research only examined the attitudes of community work staff and not other members of their departments, the evidence can only explore their perceptions of their managers. How reasonable these attitudes may be is a matter for conjecture, however, in that they reflect what community work staff feel, they do represent one side of the management equation.

The evidence in this chapter is drawn primarily from the response given by respondents to questions 3 and 7 in the final interview schedule (Appendix 3). The former asked workers: "What do you think Strathclyde Regional Council Social Work Department (i.e. the Senior Management) hope your community work will achieve?". The latter related specifically to the work that the respondents had undertaken in the recorded month and asked them to indicate what they thought their managers would regard as the most and least valuable aspects of their community work relative to the objectives identified in answer to question 3. The procedures for analysis of this data were the same as those adopted for the material discussed in the previous chapter. Recorded comments were categorised into qualitative groups, quantified and rank ordered as a proportion of the comments made.

As in the previous chapter, the overall rank ordering of comments is contrasted with the rank orders not only of each strata of the sample but also in relation to age, (contrasting those above and below the mean

age of 32 years), sex, professional qualification (comparing CQSW holders with all other qualified workers), and work location (comparing those sharing an office base with other social work staff with those who do not).

Workers' views of the aspirations of their senior managers for their practice

Exploring the general views as to the expectations of their social work managers, the overriding characteristic is the negativity of the comments of the workers. The most popular category, representing 21% of the comments but made by 43% of the sample, reflects a feeling that social work management would wish to impose limitations on the scope of their workers activity which directly links them to a client, rather than more general community focus. In turn this produces a sense of second class status among community workers relative to their social work colleagues. The comments form a composite category; collectively they reveal a sense of frustration about the kinds of activities which the workers feel to be valued. The workers' comments should not necessarily be interpreted as devaluing service based or client focused work per se, but rather as rejecting an approach to community work which sees it merely as a subservient service function to mainstream social work activities. Such an approach is seen as a distortion of the workers own views of the potential of community work as revealed by their comments on their own aspirations for their practice as discussed in the previous chapter. The tenor of feeling is well illustrated by the following examples: 'Social work management see community work as secondary to social work, to be tolerated only if concerned with

respectable groups (e.g. playgroups, leisure groups)': as 'a low social work priority': as 'concerned with client based groups': to 'set up minor social work schemes providing local services e.g. well established Alcohol Anonymous groups': as 'an appendage to Social Work': as 'a means of responding to low priority social work referrals, e.g. elderly and housing': as 'a means of taking the load off social workers'.

The next two categories of comment both represent 22% of the sample, one is more concilliatory in tone whilst the other is highly negative about social work management. The former is in many ways similar to the first group, particularly in its emphasis on the value attached by social work management to community care and preventive strategies. However, the tone of these comments reveals a greater level of shared values between social work management and the community workers making the comments. In other words, the comments are presented in neutral rather than the negative terms of the first group. The workers acknowledge a genuine concern on the part of social work management to see their efforts produce resolution to local problems though through adoption of a generally conservative style of community work activity. Hence comments like: 'Social work management hope community workers will help solve problems in local areas working alongside social workers (undertaking case and group work)'. 'They are expected to adopt a preventive community care approach and to develop the use of volunteers and self-help'.

These comments are interesting to compare with those in the other group like: 'Social work management do not appreciate or understand what community work can do/are not committed to community work/are not interested in community efforts'. These represent a highly negative

comment by the workers on the attitudes of their management which really questions their level of commitment to community work as an activity. That over a fifth of the workers should be so lacking in confidence in the support, knowledge or interest of their senior social work management is disturbing.

Two categories of comment representing 17% of the sample (8% of the comments) also tie for fourth place in the rank order. Again they contrast markedly in their negative and positive orientations. The first is one of the most positive reflecting a belief in the commitment of senior management to the role of community work as an anti-deprivation strategy. Though the emphasis is on change at the local level the regularity of reference to implementing the Regional Deprivation Policy and the Worthington Report represents a much more broad ranging belief in the perception among management of the scope of community work as a social change method. One worker says, for example: 'Social work management hope community work will lead to an increased level of community activity directed towards local issues in deprived areas leading to changes at local level'.

The other fourth ranked category, however, returns to a negative stance. Here the workers claim that the level of communication with senior management is of such poor quality that the workers do not know what management hopes will be achieved by the employment of community workers. Hence comments like: 'Social work management has failed to communicate its aims and objectives/workers do not know or find it hard to get a picture of the priority which social work management attaches to community work'.

The sixth and seventh ranked comment categories are quite closely related to one another and are of a more positive quality. They represent comments made by 9.3% and 7.4% of the sample respectively. In the first case, community work is seen as being charged with responsibility not only to promote change at the local level, but also to promote changed perceptions within social work itself of the most appropriate ways of working. Several comments refer to: 'moving away' from social pathology explanations of deprivation. In the second case, emphasis is placed on helping the Social Work Department to appreciate community need and become more effectively involved in responding to it. Comments like: 'Management hope community work will improve social work relations and links with the community and hence sensitise the department to community need'.

By the eighth place the categories represent the comments of only three members of the sample. They continue to reflect conflicting perceptions of the attitudes of senior management to community work. One category, distinguishing between the attitudes of community development management and social work management, is interesting in its implication that the conflict over appropriate approaches does not just exist between fieldworkers and their managementt but also between managers. A worker comments: 'There is tension between community development management and social work management - the former want a relationship with the deprivation strategy, the latter greater links with mainstream social work and the growth of community care rather than development and action'.

A further comment of interest suggests that some workers see themselves as being used by their management as a buffer between themselves and the local elected members in their areas.

As in other parts of the research it is of interest to examine whether there are differences in outlook between the four sample strata. However, though there are slight variations in the rank ordering between Community Work Assistants and the other three groups, these could only be regarded as of marginal significance. Of more interest is the overall distribution of comments between those which could be regarded as relatively negative, relatively positive or neutral about the aspirations of social work managers for the work of their community workers. The results of this analysis are produced in Table 8.1.

Analysis of the comments catgegories by this means reveals the level of negative feeling about the views of senior social work management among community work staff generally and some variation between the strata. The pattern revealed is one of substantial negative views, relative to positive views, for the sample as a whole, with this pattern accentuated for the Community Worker and Community Development Organiser groups. Only among the Senior Community Workers are negative comments balanced by positive ones. These results raise interesting questions about whether community development staff are appropriately located in the Social Work Department. They are totally consistent with the valuation given to work with social work management in the exploration of the aspects of their work which the workers had valued themselves.

Examination of these results in relation to the variables of age, sex, qualification and work location produces little variation in relative rank ordering of comments except in relation to the last (see

Table 8.1 Compositive categories of response expressed as a percentage of comments made by each stata (Actual numbers of comments in brackets)

| | Positive | Neutral | Negative | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| C.W. | 25.9% (11) | 18.5% (10) | 55.6% (30) | 100% (54) |
| C.D.O. | 23.1% ( 3) | 23.1% ( 3) | 53.8% ( 7) | 100% (13) |
| Senior | 42.9% ( 6) | 14.3% ( 2) | 42.9% ( 6) | 100% (14) |
| C.W.A. | 39.3% (11) | 17.7% ( 5) | 42.9% (12) | 100% (48) |
| All groups | 31.2% (34) | 18.3% (20) | 50.5% (55) | 100% (109) |

Table 8.2). Workers not sharing their office base with other social work staff show a markedly lower degree of frustration about the aspirations of their senior managers as they see them. Their top ranked category is the positive statement of their belief in the commitment of their senior management to community work as an anti-deprivation strategy. Their joint second ranked category though referring to more conservative models of community work does show a belief in the integrity of their managers in addressing local community concerns. In addition they express much less frustration about the quality of their communications with their managers than their colleagues who are based alongside other social workers.

It may be suggested that the findings in relation to work location indicate less difficulty in their relationships with the social work department particularly its managers. The impression is left that these workers may have a relatively higher degree of operational autonomy but that as a consequence they are more able to see themselves as promoting activities which would be valued by their managers and take a much more optimistic view of the potential congruence of objectives between their managers and themselves. Conversely it suggests that workers located alongside other social work staff, and hence directly subject to the expression of social work values, are more conscious of differences between their own objectives and those of social work as a whole. Workers operating independently of other social work staff may be more able to fulfil their own work objectives than their colleagues who feel constrained by the influences and expectations of mainstream social work. If such role strain is indicated by these findings, the recent decision to locate all workers at least in part in social work area

Table 8.2 Relative rank ordering of comment categories by age, sex, work location and professional qualification

| Category | All | Location | | Age (+ or -32) | | Professional Qualification | | Sex | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | S.W. Base | Non S.W. Base | Older | Younger | CQSW | Non CQSW | Women | Men |
| ...'s client focussed work | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Comm.care work | 2a | 4 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 4 | 2 | 3 | 2 |
| ...'s not committed to ... | 2b | 3 | 4 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 3 |
| Anti-deprivation wk. | 4a | 5 | 1 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 5 | 3 |
| ... mangt. failed to communicate aims | 4b | 2 | 7 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 5 | 3 | 5 |
| To change s.w. org. | 6 | 5 | 6 | 4 | 7 | 4 | 6 | 7 | 5 |
| Improve .../community relations | 7 | 7 | 5 | 7 | 6 | 7 | 6 | 6 | 7 |

teams may be of questionable benefit unless changes occur in this work location which reduce the tensions which community work staff appear from this evidence to experience. Though this evidence relates only to community work in a social work department, it is possible that proximity to the mainstream workers of any host department in which community workers are based may increase the degree of role strain which they experience.

In relation to the other variables, it is worth noting that CQSW holders are more negative about the quality of communication with their senior managers than those holding other professional qualifications. It is suggested that this may reflect a higher level of expectation of understanding of community work, based on having a common experience of training with other social work staff. This finding is the reverse of the conclusion of the Thomas and Warburton study' which suggested that those trained in social work were better integrated into their host department.

Workers' evaluation of their practice relative to the ascribed aspirations of their managers.

(a) Positive aspects

Turning to an exploration of the views of the workers as to the aspects of their work undertaken in the recorded month which would be most and least valued by their managers, there is a high level of consistency with the more general comments on their expectations discussed above. As in the previous chapter, a rank ordering of the comment categories by sample strata is helpful. This is done first in relation to the activities thought to be valued and is presented in

Table 8.3. (Due to their small numbers only the first four are listed for Community Development Organisers and Seniors whilst Community Workers and the total are listed only to place six as several tie beyond this point).

The most popular category: community care and service schemes, represents 10.9% of the comments which were made by 27.8% of the sample. It would appear to reflect a belief that social work managers regard service oriented community work activity as more valuable than campaigning activities which may engender greater degrees of conflict. An examination of the comments shows a wider range of client groups: disabled, blind, elderly, mothers and toddlers and young people. Several respondents specifically mention the Social Work Department promoted Wintercare scheme for the elderly. Examples given in the comments included: 'Work in Drop-in Centre': 'Work from community care by advising Social Work Department about interest of local community groups': 'Work on Wintercare schemes moving on to Day Care, also getting lunch clubs to move into day care role': 'Setting up new clubs and day care facilities': 'Work with the street warden/good neighbour scheme steering groups'.

Perhaps expectedly another popularly rated category is work with social work colleagues, which shares equal second place with advice and information work. These comments represent 8% of the total and are made by 20.4% of the samples.

That social work managers should be seen to value collaboration between community workers and their social work colleagues is hardly surprising. What is more interesting is what the comments indicate about why this is valued. Not all comments provide insight, but two

Table 8.3 Rank order of activities thought to be valued by social work management by sample strata

| | C.W.A. | C.W. | S.C.W. | C.D.O. | All |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Community care & service schemes | Community care & service schemes | Corporate working | (Work with S.W. (management | Community Care & service schemes |
| 2. | Advice and info. work | (IT/youth or (childrens work | Work with other comm. dev. staff | (Work with other (comm. dev. staff | (Advice and info. (work |
| 3. | (Work with indiv. (& families | (Advice and info. (work | (Work with S.W. (management | (Resource work | (Work with S.W.'s (non-managerial) |
| 4. | (Gen. work with (community groups | (Work with S.W.'s ((non-managerial) | (Community care & (service schemes | (Work with S.W.'s ((non-managerial) | Work with other comm. dev. staff |
| 5. | (Work with S.W.'s ((non-managerial) | (Prov. comm. (premises and (amenities | | | (Work with the (unemployed |
| 6. | (Work with the (elderly | (Work with the (unemployed | | | (Corporate working |
| 7. | (Unclear what is valued | | | | |

broadly distinct purposes seem to emerge. Firstly, that the contact should support and promote the work of Social Workers in relation to traditionally defined client groups, and the second that Social Workers should become more aware of and involved in community based activities. Though the majority of comments do not give a clear indication of what is intended, those that do tend to favour the former. An example of the former would be: 'any work which supports client/caseworker relations and involves social work funds' and of the latter: 'work to bring social work and community development staff closer together and involve social work with the community'.

The value believed to be attached to advice and information work is also of interest. The researcher speculates that this category scores highly, in part at least, because it emphasies individualised working which is more readily compatible with most area team social work activity than direct work with community groups.

The range of information work which is believed to be valued is broad, encompassing: housing, health, education, welfare rights/ claimants, and other local government service issues.

In fourth place comes the category - work with other community development staff, these comments represent 5.8% of the comments and are made by 14.8% of the sample. The interesting aspect of these comments is that all of them relate to management and supervisory functions of the respondents in relation to other members of staff, rather than to professional collaboration in practice. Five of the eight comments are made by Community Development Organisers and Seniors which suggests that they believe that their management value them fulfilling their role in the authority structure of the department. The following are typical

definitions of valued work: 'support to communty care work undertaken by other staff - street warden co-ordinator, latch key worker and MSC community care scheme and general management responsibility for community development staff': 'Support and supervision of community development staff'.

Overall the next two categories, both representing comments by seven workers, relate to work with the unemployed and corporate working. In relation to the former there was particular concern within social work at the time of research to find ways of responding positively to long term unemployment and the ranking of the category probably reflects this. Comments made by workers include: 'Work with the unemployed is seen as part of the Divisional Social Strategy': 'Work with the unemployed towards community businesses': 'meeting on proposed unemployed centre for the area': 'work on MSC schemes'.

Comment has already been made in this study on the significance attached to corporate working in the Regional deprivation strategy, it is perhaps not too surprising therefore that this is regarded as a valued activity. The following comments illustrate the kind of work involved: 'Work with Area Project Team': 'Acting as liaison worker between Area Initiative and Social Work Department': 'Co-ordination between agencies': 'Corporate approach-District, Regional and community - to working party on Area Project': 'Work with Area Development Team'.

Five categories occupy equal seventh position: work with social work management; general work with community groups; I.T. youth and childrens work, resource work and work to provide community premises and amenities.

It is interesting that comments on work with social work management emphasise ways in which community development staff offer services to the department and that these comments come mainly from Community Development Organisers and Seniors. In the youth and children category four of the six comments relate to childrens' work. As noted in relation to the previous chapter much of the work in the last two categories might be seen as facilitating development of community care or service types of work.

Remaining categories represent comments of five or less workers, nonetheless some are worthy of particular note. One, which ranks in equal third place for Community Work Assistants, is not, in a sense, an answer to the question posed in that respondents claim that it is not clear to them what social work management values about their work. This reflects some of the very negative feelings discussed earlier. It is worth noting also that only 5.6% of the comments made could be regarded as relating to areas of practice likely to extensively involve styles of work containing potential conflictual, campaigning collective action by the community. The comments relate to housing campaigns and work with tenants associations. That they are so low down the rank order is an indication of the generally held belief that social work management values more conservative service based styles of community work.

Comparisons between the strata of the sample produce some interesting variations noteably, as in the previous question, between the Community Development Organisers and Senior Community Workers as distinct from the other two strata.

For the Community Development Organisers and Seniors combined, the most significant variations are to be found in relation to: work with social work management, and, work with other community development staff. Since the latter largely relates to managerial and supervisory roles, the two categories combined indicate a strong perception of the imporance attached by senior social work managers to line management tasks. The predominance of comments from senior workers in the category: corporate working, is also very noticeable. The Community Workers and Community Work Assistants are much more concerned than the other two groups with the direct work within the community which they believe that senior management will value. Thus community care and service work and, information and advice work, score more highly.

Table 8.4 provides a comparison of the relative rank ordering of comment categories in relation to the other variables explored: age, sex, work location and professional qualification. Here there are several interesting variations in perception.

Firstly, non-CQSW qualified staff appear to believe community care work to be more highly valued than their CQSW colleagues. To a lesser extent this appears to apply also to men relative to women. This finding is difficult to interpret but it may be that these groups have less of an orientation to this type of work and are therefore more prone to project it as an expectation that social work managers might have of them.

Older workers appear to have a lower expectation that their managers value advice and information work but there is no obvious explanation for this. Much more interesting is the variation between those located independent of other social work staff relative to their colleagues, in

Table 8.4 Relative rank ordering of comment categories of valued activities by age, sex, work location and professionsal qualification.

| Category | All | Location | | Age | | Qualification | | Sex | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | S.W. base | Non S.W. | Old | Young | COSW | Non COSW | Women | Men |
| Community Care | 1 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 8 | 1 | 4 | 1 |
| Advice & Inf. work | 2a | 3 | 2 | 8 | 2 | 5 | 4 | 2 | 2 |
| Work with other social work staff | 2b | 1 | 11 | 1 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 3 |
| Work with other comm. dev. staff | 4 | 4 | 5 | 2 | 7 | 2 | 4 | 7 | 3 |
| Work with unemployed | 5a | 6 | 5 | 3 | 7 | 5 | 3 | 10 | 3 |
| Corporate Working | 5b | 8 | 2 | 3 | 7 | 2 | 9 | 7 | 6 |
| Work with S.W. Management | 7a | 4 | 10 | 3 | 11 | 8 | 4 | 10 | 6 |
| General work with community groups | 7b | 8 | 5 | 11 | 3 | 8 | 9 | 4 | 9 |
| I.T. Youth & Children's work | 7c | 8 | 5 | 7 | 7 | 5 | 4 | 4 | 9 |
| Resource Work | 7d | 6 | 9 | 8 | 5 | 1 | 11 | 7 | 8 |
| Prov. of comm. premises etc. | 7e | 10 | 2 | 8 | 5 | 11 | 4 | 2 | 11 |

relation to the value thought to be attached by social work management to work with social work colleagues. These workers appear to have much less expectation that this should be a central element of their work which may help to explain the generally lower level of frustration expressed by them in relation to work with social work colleagues as discussed earlier in the chapter. That these workers have a greater expectation that their managers wish them to engage in corporate work is also of interest in reflecting a more inter-organisational than intra-organisational focus. It is more difficult however to suggest reasons why CQSW qualified staff are more prone than their colleagues to identify corporate working as a valued activity.

The pattern of significant difference relating to work location continues to be evident in relation to workers views of the value attached to work with social work management. Those in locations alongside social work staff rate this more highly as a management aspiration, perhaps reflecting a more substantial expectation that they will focus on matters internal to the social work organisation. That older workers also reflect this view is probably explained by their marginally greater representation in the Community Development Organiser and Senior Community Worker groups.

The provision of community premises facilities and amenities is thought to be more highly valued by those not located with other social work staff, by non-CQSW holders and women. In the case of the first group this may simply reflect the fact that many of them operate from premises shared with community organisations but for the other two groups explanations are less obvious. It is similarly difficult to

interpret why CQSW qualified staff should see resource work as so much more highly valued than their colleagues.

Negative Aspects

Moving on to the aspects of their work which the workers believed their management would not value highly, Table 8.5 provides the rank order of comment categories by sample strata. (Due to the number of categories achieving equal rank, a larger number is included than in the previous table).

The data in relation to this question has presented some difficulty for analysis, firstly, because it attracted the lowest number of comments (1.6 per worker) and, secondly, because of the wide spread and somewhat idiosyncratic nature of comments. If taken at face value, using category headings only, the results appear to lack a high degree of consistency with other comments about social work management. However, close examination of the comments reveals that concerns that activities might not be valued are more to do with the way in which they are being pursued than with the activities themselves. Similarly, a number of comments suggest that management might value an activity but that it is inappropriate for that particular worker to be doing it. With these caveats in mind, it is worth examining the rank order further.

In first place overall was work on housing campaigns. Given the responses to previous questions it is suggested that the concern of the workers is that their management do not value campaigning style activity, rather than that they object to housing per se. It should be

Table 8.5 Rank order of activities not thought to be valued by social work management by sample strata

| | C.W.A. | C.W. | S.C.W. | C.D.O. | ALL |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Work with the unemployed | Work on housing campaigns | Corporate working | (Work with the (unmployed | Work on housing campaigns |
| 2 | (Advice and info. (work ( | (Prov. of comm. (premises & amenities ( | | (Work with other (community dev. (staff | (Work with the (unemployed ( |
| 3 | (Prov. of comm. (premises & (amenities | (Unspec. work which (challenges L.A. | | | (Prov. of comm. (premises & amenities ( |
| 4 | (Odd obligements ( | (Work with S.W. (management | | | (Unspec. work which (challenges L.A. |
| 5 | (Comm. care and (service schemes | (Telephone calls ( | | | (Corporate working ( |
| 6 | (Informal (discussion | (Odd obligements ( | | | (Admin. & clerical (work |
| 7 | (Work with indiv. (& families | (Informal (discussion | | | (Odd obligements ( |
| 8 | (Work with tenants (associations | (Work with indiv. (& families | | | (Informal (discussions |
| 9 | | (Gen. work with (community groups | | | (Work with indiv. (& families |

noted that this category is entirely made up of comments by Community Workers.

Three categories with just five comments each (9.9% of the sample) occupy equal second place in the rank order. Unspecified work which challenges the Local Authority, is more predictable than: work to provide community premises facilities and amenities. The former is an explicit expression of the concerns which it is suggested are behind the placing of work on housing campaigns in first place. The comments all indicate aggressive conflictual styles of work which is sometimes described as political in nature. The following illustrate the point: 'Issue work which leads to conflict with the Department': 'Any work bringing worker or group into conflict with the social work department': 'Work with political organisations seeking to change Council policy': 'Having a go at Strathclyde Regional Council'.

The placing of the more neutral category - to provide community premises facilities or amenities, is easier to understand when the comments are examined in more detail, for three of the comments specify concern over time involved in managing or maintaining resources rather than the provision of the facilities themselves. The implication is that the tasks involved do not deserve the time and expense involved in doing them because they represent opportunity costs in terms of other activities which might have been undertaken. Some of the comments also give the impression that workers feel that these activities may be regarded as rather trivial. For example, one worker comments on, 'cleaning and organising decoration of the community house'.

The third category occupying second place is work with the unemployed. It is not entirely clear why this is not regarded as

valued but reference to 'issue based work' and work being 'conceptually difficult to relate to Social Work' suggest that for some, at least, the style of the activity is central.

No less than five categories occupy equal fifth place in the rank order. Each represents just four comments (7.4% of the sample). The categories are: corporate working; administration and clerical work; 'odd obligements'; informal discussions and work with individuals and families.

The placing of corporate management given its centrality in the Regional policy, is difficult to interpret but comments seem to relate to specific tensions arising from practice of this kind rather than the approach in principle. In addition it is worth noting that though the approach may reflect Regional policy it does not necessarily coincide with the personal dispositions of many social work managers.

In the administration category it is interesting that two of the four comments note that the work specified should be undertaken by clerical staff rather than community work staff.

The category: 'odd obligements', reflects similar concern to that indicated by some of the comments regarding work on community premises, facilities and amenities and administrative work, in that it implies that these are not roles justifying the time of community workers due to their triviality. The informal discussion category may be similar in that it illustrates concern about activities without a clear purpose or visible product.

The low value believed to be placed on individual and family work is intriguing given the centrality of this activity in the social work department as a whole. Part of the concern at least seems to be about

the quality of the work undertaken and part may be about the lack of visible purposefulness of some of the activity. Hence the comment: 'Work that they would see as amateur social work because they don't recognise the approach a community worker would take'.

Other categories which do not appear in the top nine overall but score more highly for particular strata of the sample may also deserve further exploration. For example, in relation to the high ranking by Community Development Organisers of the category: working with other community development staff, it is the nature of the content of the activity which they feel might be questioned. For example, having to deal as a line manager with lax staff attitudes or supervising workers on activities of a conflictual nature. Similarly, in relation to work on community care schemes which scores more highly for Community Work Assistants, comments indicate that it is the approach to organising them or the time involved which may be regarded as problematic. In relation to advice and information work, as cited by Community Work Assistants, the problem is seen as arising from the demands on the Social Work Department which result from it. The comments from Community Workers in relation to work with social work management are similar in that they reflect circumstances which place difficult demands on the managers.

Overall, this question produced the least satisfactory response and the researcher has a suspicion that some workers were less than willing to give a direct answer to the question. The fact that the 'don't knows' form the largest single group of responses is seen as supportive evidence for this view.

In the light of the relatively low number of comments made by workers on the aspects of their work which they thought would not be valued by their senior managers, caution must be exercised in interpreting analysis in relation to age, sex, work location and professional qualification. Table 8.6 indicates the relative rank ordering of comment categories in relation to these variables.

In relation to work on housing campaigns, the absence of concern of workers located independent of other social work staff may well reflect their generally more positive view of the dispositions of their senior managers to more radical forms of community work. Their high ranking of provision of community premises facilities and amenities is, however, anomolous. As was noted earlier, however, the problem may not be seen in the activity as such but in the time that it takes up. That younger workers place the category: work which challenges the local authority, in first place, may give credence to the belief in an association between youth and radical aspirations, though why CQSW holders should rank this so much more highly than their colleagues is difficult to interpret.

As noted in the previous chapter, 'odd obligements' are a particular frustration to women which they believe will be shared by their managers. Older workers may express concern about this activity as it is seen as less appropriate to the more senior posts which they are marginally more likely to occupy.

In relation to corporate working, it appears that men and workers operating independently of other social work staff feel that their management regard this as a problematic area. It may well be that for the latter group this concern relates to issues of operational

Table 8.6 Relative rank ordering of comment categories of non-valued activities by age, sex, work location and professional qualifications

| Categories | All | S.W. Base | Non S.W. Base | Old | Young | CQSW | Non CQSW | Wmn. | Men |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Work on Housing Campaigns | 1 | 1 | 8 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 5 |
| Work with the unemployed | 2a | 2 | 3 | 1 | 5 | 3 | 6 | 9 | 1 |
| Prov. of comm. premises etc. | 2b | 8 | 1 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 7 |
| Work which challenges the L.A. | 2c | 2 | 3 | 7 | 1 | 1 | 9 | 4 | 2 |
| Corporate working | 5a | 8 | 2 | 3 | 5 | 3 | 3 | 7 | 2 |
| Administration | 5b | 4 | 3 | 3 | 5 | 7 | 2 | 7 | 2 |
| Odd obligemnents | 5c | 4 | 3 | 1 | 9 | 7 | 3 | 1 | 9 |
| Informal Discussion | 5d | 4 | 8 | 7 | 5 | 7 | 6 | 4 | 7 |
| Work with individuals & families | 5e | 4 | 3 | 7 | 3 | 3 | 6 | 4 | 5 |

accountability which are already influenced by the relative remoteness from the Social Work Department of this group of workers.

Other significant differences in rank order occur in relation to work with the unemployed, which is regarded as much more problematic by men and older workers, and in relation to administration, which is thought to be less valued in the eyes of their managers by men and non-CQSW qualified staff. It is difficult to suggest reasons for these variations.

Comment

If we are to draw a general conclusion from this evidence, it is that the relationship between the community work staff as a whole and their host department is an extremely difficult one. It can be argued that the nature of community work itself, when it is concerned with the promotion of active community participation in local affairs and criticism of policies, is problematic to any sponsoring agent. But the problems here seem to lie much deeper. The evidence only provides insight into the way community work staff see the problems but it appears that they believe there to be fundamental differences of value between community work and social work. Some appear much more alienated from the predominant culture and ideology of social work than others but the extent of the negativity when compared with the evidence from the previous chapter (which is supported by material reviewed in Chapter 11) that most workers appear to adopt a quite moderate stance in relation to community work, suggests a deep seated problem. The evidence in Chapter 6 indicates that most workers have quite substantial contact with social work colleagues and cannot therefore be regarded as likely to be

operating solely on the basis of myths that they project about social workers. There is a strong feeling that social workers generally and their managers in particular lack a real understanding of community work and possibly a commitment to it. Given that the work undertaken, as described in Chapter 5, is generally non-controversial and fits quite well with the philosophy of practice outlined in the Social Work Director's review of community work of 1984,[2] discussed in Chapter 2, the sources of the cultural and ideological differences are worthy of examination. Unfortunately this research did not explore these dimensions on a comparative basis, however, one of the factors which may have bearing is the very low number of workers who hold qualifications in social work as revealed in the analysis in Chapter 4. 19.6% held CQSW qualifications as compared with 42.9% with youth and community work qualifications. Expressed as a percentage of all workers with professional qualifications this represents just 29% qualified in social work.

The influence of qualifications on workers attitudes to employment in a social work department was also discussed by Thomas and Warburton.[3] They distinguished between 'endogenous workers' - those oriented towards a social work culture and 'exogenous workers' - those oriented in other directions, and indicated that the former were more likely to have social work training. They found that the endogenous workers:

> "seemed able better to manage the simultaneous roles of colleagues and internal change agent....and that of the external change agent in the community".

The analysis of responses relative to qualification in this sample however, indicates a greater level of frustration by those holding

social work qualifications than among their non-social work qualified colleagues. This finding could be indicative of different expectations in the two groups of attitudes that they would expect to find in their host department. In the decade since the Thomas and Warburton study there has been increasingly heavy emphasis in social work training on 'unitary methods', that is, an approach to social work practice involving case, group and community work methods. Those trained in such a framework but finding that it does not seem to have extensively influenced social work practice may be particularly aggrieved by what they may perceive as the devaluing of the contribution of community work. Those trained outwith social work may not have the same expectations as their colleagues and may more readily assume that they will make a specialist contribution not carried in mainstream social work.

In relation to this discussion, it is also worth considering the degree of previous work experience in social work activities. This showed that 25% of workers who had held community work posts previously did so in social work departments but that of those who had had other posts in areas related to community work, 50% had been in social work settings. This suggests that training may be an influential factor though, as revealed in Chapter 11, the workers do not appear to think so.

Whilst it is useful to look at the backgrounds of the community work staff, it is also relevant to ask from what background social work managers are drawn. No direct evidence on this is available for Strathclyde however. Though it is known that there was one Divisional Director and one District Manager from a community work background at

the time of the research, the vast majority of managers would be likely to be social work trained, and, given their age, to have studied at a time prior to significant influence of community work on social work training. Enquiries made by the researcher for the Regional Council in 1983 also showed that in all but one CQSW course in Scotland, though most claimed to give attention to unitary methods, community work was regarded as a minority and optional interest, if taught at all. It would have been hoped that fifteen years after the Seebohm Report[4] and the Social Work (Scotland) Act there would have been more change than this.

Many of these issues were also recognised in the Crousaz and Davies[5] research. They reported that:

> "Attemps to involve social workers in the work of the community was often felt to be more effort than it was worth, since social workers were generally too busy with case load and statutory responsibilities to spare much time to become involved in non-caseload activities, and they frequently held different perceptions of the goals and purpose of community work." and:
>
> "Communication with the wider department, the senior managementor other area officers was not always easy for an area office community worker.....area officers were not themselves generallytrained or experienced in community work".

It is also pertinent in relation to the Crousaz and Davies material to note that their findings in relation to a 'client' rather than a 'service' orientation (see page 25 for explanation of the distinction) among workers holds for this sample of workers but that their employers appear to be felt to value the reverse.

The findings of Crousaz and Davies are also reflected in the findings of the extensive study of social work teams by Stevenson and Parsloe[6] (1978). Their study covered thirty-one teams including 225

respondents of whom just seven were community workers. They found no examples of:

> "social workers deliberately attempting to develop community work as an alternative mode of intervention, unless they were in a designated specialist post."

They stated:

> "...community work was hived off from the main activity of the team. It was rare for team members to pass on referrals to community workers."

They also said:

> "These findings suggest that the vast majority of team members were not practicing a generic approach with regard to methods of intervention. The Seebohm report sounds a little hollow...."

Elsewhere,[7] Stevenson comments in relation to community workers:

> "Our research showed the discomfort experienced by the handful of such workers whom we found in the thirty-one area teams studied."

These findings of other studies offer parallel evidence of difficulties encountered by community work in social work settings. The findings for Strathclyde may not therefore be exceptional, though the scale of community work employment in the department does suggest that the disaffection may be particularly problematic. It is, of course, difficult to gauge the degree of the difficulties relative to those which many occupational groups may record in relation to bureaucratic organisational and managerial questions. Payne,[8] for example, reviewing research findings on job satisfaction in social work lists commonly expressed dissatisfaction as:

> "resources, work pressure, absense of a career grade, the various aspects of the organisations (size, bureaucracy) and management."

Similarly, research by Mawby[3] on social workers in an English Metropolitan District Authority provides a rank order of factors considered problematic in the job in which:

> "Management: communication within the hierarchy: hierarchical control and procedures, is the second ranked problem after economic and resource constraints."

The evidence of this study and other sources in relation to community workers in social work departments suggests that management relations are a particularly problematic area requiring considerable attention.

Summary

This chapter has explored workers responses when questioned about the activities which they felt would be most and least valued by the senior management of Strathclyde Regional Social Work Department.

In relation to these questions respondents were prone to negative comments. The most popular comment category, reflecting comments of 43% of the sample, indicates that they feel that social work management would wish to impose limitations on the scope of workers activity which directly link them to a client rather than a more general community focus. There is a strong sense of frustration about the activities which workers believe are valued. Some workers comment on what they see as a community care orientation among social work managers in neutral rather than negative terms, acknowledging a genuine concern to resolve local problems, though through a generally conservative style of community work activity. However, further very negative comments question whether social work managers have any commitment to community work. Others comment that the quality of communication with them is so

bad that workers do not know what managers hope their work will achieve. On the other hand, some workers comment positively about a commitment to the deprivation strategy and to the role of community work in changing perceptions inside social work.

The balance between positive neutral and negative comments is disturbing. Only 31.2% were positive but 50.5% negative with 18.3% neutral. The pattern of negative responses is accentuated for Community Development Organisers and Community Workers but for no group do positive comments outnumber negative ones. No doubt comments reflect the particular managers with whom workers have contact, as well as the characteristics of the workers themselves.

Viewed in relation to other variables, the findings show a generally much lower degree of frustration among workers not sharing their office base with other social work staff.

The views of workers when examining the actual work they had undertaken during the recorded month were generally compatible with their views of their managers general aspirations for community work. The workers believed that their most commonly valued activity was in relation to community care and services schemes. Also thought to be valued were: work with social work colleagues and advice and information work, which shared equal second place in the rank order. Some seem to think the former is valued because it involves support to social workers in activities related to traditional client groups and others since it may promote greater awareness of the nature of community work. Advice and information work may partly be cited because it reflects a more individualised client orientation more readily understandable to social work managers. Other categories thought to be valued were: work with

other community development staff; work with unemployed: corporate working; work with social work management; general work with community groups: IT children's and youth work and, resource work.

There are some interesting variations between the strata of the sample, Community Development Organisers and Senior Community Workers emphasise tasks related to their managerial roles, hence: work with social work management and work with other community development staff are particularly popular categories. Senior Community Workers also stress corporate working. Community Workers and Community Work Assistants emphasise direct work within the community, especially: community care and service work and information and advice work.

In relation to aspects of work thought to be valued by social work management, workers located independent of other social work staff place less emphasis on work with colleagues and their managers and more on corporate working. Non CQSW staff believe that community care is more highly valued than their colleagues.

In relation to those aspects of their work that it was felt the managers of the Social Work Department would not value, workers identified housing campaigns most commonly. The implication is that their managers do not value the style of work involved and this view is reinforced by two of the three categories in equal second place in the rank order. One is: unspecified work which challenges the local authority, and the other: work with the unemployed. The negative view of the former is self-evident whilst for the latter, it is again the style of approach which seems to be of concern. Workers suggest that the activity is 'conceptually difficult to relate to social work' and unpopular because it is 'issue based'. The concern that social work

managers would not value work to provide community premises, facilities and amenities is more difficult to understand. Concern seems to be over the time and expense involved and that the activity may be seen as rather trivial. Other not uncommonly cited categories were: corporate working; administrative and clerical work; 'odd obligements'; informal discussions and, work with individuals and families.

As in other aspects of the evidence discussed in this chapter significant variations appear in relation to whether workers are located alongside social work colleagues or not. The latter group show less concern about more radical campaigning styles of work and more concern about corporate working.

Overall, the question on activities that would not be valued by social work managers produced the smallest number of responses of all the questions and 'don't knows' formed the largest single group of reponses.

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# Chapter 9

## Community workers views of the Regional Council Politicians

### Introduction

In reviewing the history of community work development in the first chapter, it was noted that from the late 1960's workers increasingly came to view their activities as political in nature. The growing trend to a more directive approach based on the more explicit expression of the workers own ideological stance inevitably made community work a more controversial activity. This was especially so when the workers were employed by the state but might be seen to be directly involved in the promotion of political action by the community which challenged the decision making of elected members. The orientation of community workers to the needs of disadvantaged minority groups often placed them in a position where conflict with the predominant interests of the community, as respresented by elected councillors, was likely. However, the degree to which the politicisation of community work was to be problematic varied enormously as a reflection of the interactions between the relative dispositions of the workers and the political values expressed by politicians, particularly at local government level, though occasionally too at national level. It might be anticipated that the higher the degree of congruence of political values between community workers and the local politicians, the lower the likelihood of conflict. In an authority such as Strathclyde, therefore, with an explicit anti-deprivation and community development policy, a relatively low degree of conflict could be anticipated, especially given the

generally non-controversial nature of the content of workers activities as described in Chapter 5.

This chapter explores the views held by the community work staff of the Regional Council politicians and reveals that there is still a degree of tension despite the apparently sympathetic environment for the practice of community work. Given the power of the Council in relation to the formulation of policy both for community work itself and in relation to other areas which community workers may wish to work with communities to influence, relationships with them are potentially a very significant aspect of activity.

Contacts with politicians and implications for workers' perceptions

In the discussion in Chapters 5 and 6 the level of contact between the workers and politicians has been explored but it is worth reviewing some of this material to set the comments discussed in this chapter in context. Generally, contact is limited (3.6% of contact time). It is slightly higher for Seniors and Community Development Organisers than their colleagues. Unfortunately the workers' recordings on which the time-budget analysis was based failed to clearly indicate in many instances whether the contact was with Regional or District councillors. The content of these contacts, however, suggests that especially for Community Work Assistants and Community Workers the contacts arise as a component of work with community groups more often relating to District Council than Regional Council services, particularly housing. This being so, the level of contact with the elected members of the Council actually responsible for community work is very low indeed. Only six workers attended any committee meetings of Regional or District Council;

since half of these were Community Development Organisers this is the only group for whom it was a significant activity. Few workers then, directly observe politicians in their formal roles.

As Tables 6.10 and 6.11 indicate, a significant majority (65%) of contact time with politicians is undertaken jointly with other parties to the community work process, particularly including members of the community, most commonly, in formal meetings of non-statutory groups. It may be reasonably presumed that such contacts are primarily focussed on issues arising in the community rather than on community work practice itself. This is indicated by the content analysis of non-statutory group meetings which shows the primary focus to be: provision of community premises and amenities; work with the unemployed; housing campaigns; resource work and, IT children's and youth work. In this context workers will observe the dispositions of councillors to different types of community need and response which is no doubt a significant influence on the way that they perceive politicians. However, the politicians may well be District councillors and even where they are Regional ones they are more likely to have been operating in the role of local ward member than as members of Social Work or Community Development Committees of the Council.

Though it is not possible from the data to provide a precise picture of the interactions between the workers and politicians, it is suggested that the generally low level of contact and the degree to which the contact occurs in the context of meetings in which the primary focus is not community work itself but the problems it responds to, may mean that judgements made by workers of politicians' attitudes may be derived from limited direct evidence.

The first question to which the workers were asked to respond was: 'What do you think Strathclyde Regional Council (i.e., the elected members collectively) hope will be achieved by the employment of community workers?' This required them to take an overview of the outlook of elected members. Since very few workers appear to have observed the collective operation of councillors the views that they have expressed may be presumed to have been derived from a mixture of: generalisations from more specific experiences, the formal written policy statements of the Regional Council in relation to community work and deprivation, heresay evidence from colleagues, rumour and even fantasy about how politicians may see them. The material in this chapter may therefore say as much about the beliefs of the workers about politicians as it does about their direct experience of them. This is not altogether surprising. As Rossetti' has pointed out in discussing community participation in the London Borough of Southwark:

> "....internal politics in large organisations be they local government, industry, university, etc., are often associated with the personal and group fantasies of those who work in them about who really wields power and influence, about how much of it they have and about who is in league with whom."

She goes on to say that knowledge will often:

> "rely on indirect experience in which, it is suggested, rumour or fantasy play a considerable part".

The other two questions on which the material in this chapter is based also considered elected members on a collective basis. Respondents were asked what aspects of their work during the recorded month they thought Strathclyde Regional Council would value most and least highly in relation to their hopes for achievement through employment of community workers which had been identified in response to

the first question. The procedures for anlysis of this data were the same as those for material in the previous two chapters. Recorded comments were categorised into qualitative groups, quantified and rank ordered as a proportion of the comments made. Again, as in the previous two chapters, the overall rank ordering of comments is contrasted with the rank orders not only for each strata of the sample but also in relation to age (contrasting those above and below the mean age of 32 years), sex, professional qualification (comparing CQSW holders with all other qualified workers) and work location (comparing those sharing an office base with other community work staff with those who do not).

Workers' views of the aspirations of the Regional Councillors for their practice

Examining the general aspirations first, respondents were asked to indicate what they thought the elected members collectively would feel about community work. Whilst, as is noted below, some respondents felt it was difficult to identify a common perspective among elected members, the questions were posed in this form to reflect the fact that community development in the Region operates within a policy framework collectively agreed by the Council as a body. The researcher argues that it is therefore legitimate to expect workers to make a general interpretation of the intent of the Council in employing them.

The respondents made just less than three distinct comments each on average. Two categories occupy equal first place in terms of popularity. One of these however is, in a sense, a challenge to the legitimacy of the question in that it indicates that a substantial proportion of the sample (31.5%) find it difficult to identify the

objectives of the Council. They comment that there is lack of clarity in the thinking of the Council both with regard to community development and the overall deprivation strategy of which it is seen to be a part. Two workers even went on to suggest that they were not convinced that all councillors 'even know that they employ community workers!' It is equally interesting to note, however, that none of the workers identifying themselves with this comment failed to offer other comments as well.

The uncertainty indicated by this category is also reflected in other comments discussed below. However, it is interesting that in equal first place in terms of number of comments was a category which suggests a conscious aspiration on the part of elected members that community work should lead to anti-deprivation work as set out in the Council's policy documents. It is, in fact, distinguished by direct use of phrases indicating anti-deprivation work in areas designated as such. This often includes reference to the term Areas for Priority Treatment (APT) employed by the Regional Council in its policy statements. Hence comments like: 'to do something about deprivation in APT's'; 'implement the deprivation strategy'; 'solve local problems in deprived areas'.

In third place in the rank order is a much more general category which emphasises the role of community workers in facilitating communication between the Council and community about needs. The emphasis appears to be on the promotion of dialogue between community and Council with a view to collaborative responses. Typical of comments is: 'to provide a channel and act as facilitators of communication between the Council and community about needs'. Comments in this group represented comments from 15 workers, 27.8% of the sample.

The category occupying fourth place and representing 25.9% of sample, rather than specifying goals for community work, emphasises disapproval by the Council of certain types of community work activity. A quarter of the sample indicates that they feel the Council lacks commimtment to work which deals with contentious issues or adopts conflictual tactics. By implication, and in some cases explicitly, these workers regard the Regional Council as having a consensual framework for practice which only values work in relation to problems of a non-contentious nature. Typical comments are: 'There is a lack of Council commitment to community work when dealing with contentious issues';'adopting community action rather than community care approaches'; 'acting as a politicisor'. This category also includes the converse such as: 'preference by Council for non-controversial issues'; 'Council seeking watered down social work people'. It is worth noting at this point that in ninth place, representing 7.4% of the sample, is a category in which the workers question, not only work outside a consensual framework, but whether the Council is committed to or sympathetic to community work generally.

Returning to the rank order of comments, in fifth equal place is a further comment which questions the validity of perceiving the Council as a collectivity. These comments do not indicate what the Council hopes community work will achieve but argue, no doubt legitimately, that the commitment, expectations and understanding of councillors vary greatly. Though only one comment refers specifically to this producing 'mixed messages' for community workers, this is the general implication.

In equal fifth place representing comments by 24% of the sample is a category which suggests that the achievements which the Council seeks

may be more cosmetic than real. This category emphasises the use of community development as a public relations tool which creates the pretence of an active response to the problems of deprivation, but is in reality an exercise to improve the image of the Council. These comments suggest a certain level of cynicism among a sizeable group of workers about the purposes of the Council. Hence, comments like: 'to be seen to be doing something'; 'to be seen to have a policy towards deprivation'; 'vote catching'; 'positive discrimination is political rhetoric and posturing, e.g., the community conferences'.

By seventh place in the rank order the comments still represent 22.2% of the sample demonstrating the wide spread of comments in relation to this question. Beyond this point, however, the number of comments per category drops substantially. The seventh ranked can perhaps be interpreted as the positive version of the fourth in that it indicates thatworkers believe the Council values community care, voluntary service and self help schemes in the community. These could all be seen as practical expressions of a consenual framework for the development of community work practice.

Though representing comments made by just seven workers (13% of the sample) the vociferous and aggressive nature of the comments in the eighth ranked group is noteworthy. It returns to a more cynical, indeed almost hostile, view from some community workers of the aspirations of the Council in that it suggests, not just a cosmetic exercise, but a deliberate conspiracy to direct community energy and attention from tackling what these community workers see as 'real issues'. Hence the category includes comments like: 'to provide social policing'; 'to prop up a rotten system' and 'to keep the natives quiet'.

One of the two ninth ranked comment categories has already been noted. The other is, by contrast, of a positive nature. These comments emphasise the purpose of community work as being to influence and improve the services of Council Departments and help direct them to where they are most needed.

Remaining categories represent the comments of three or less workers and continue the pattern of ambivalent views of the Councillors' aspirations for community work. For example, comments explicitly recognising the political nature of community work like: 'to influence the direction of resource distribution', can be contrasted with ones like: 'community workers are the political pawns of the Council' or 'a tool for Councillors' political aspirations'.

As in the previous chapters it is useful to look at the overall balance of negative, neutral or positive comments and consider any differences between the sample strata. The evidence is regrouped in this way in Table 9.1. These figures suggest a high degree of uncertainty about community workers' views of the hopes of the Council for their work. This no doubt leads to a somewhat ambivalent relationship between them and their sponsors. The table suggests little variation between strata in the sample which leads to any correlation between status and outlook of workers. If anything, more senior workers tend towards more negative and neutral attitudes but the general pattern holds across the sample as a whole. These figures when compared with those from question 1, discussed in Chapter 7, do not suggest that the neutral and negative comments can be explained merely as the frustrations of workers with radical aspirations working in an unsympathetic environment.

Table 9.1

Composite categories of comments expressed as percentage of comments by each strata (Numbers of comments in brackets)

| | Positive | Neutral | Negative | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| C.W. | 41.3% (31) | 32% (24) | 26.7% (20) | 100% (75) |
| C.D.O. | 36.8% ( 7) | 31.6% ( 6) | 31.6% ( 6) | 100% (19) |
| Senior | 27.8% ( 5) | 50% ( 9) | 22.2% ( 4) | 100% (18) |
| C.W.A. | 37.8% (14) | 27% (10) | 35.1% (13) | 100% (37) |
| All Groups | 38.3% (57) | 32.9% (49) | 28.9% (43) | 100% (149) |

Comparison of the rank ordering of comment categories in relation to the variables of age, sex, work location and qualification also produces few very obvious differences in orientation. Table 9.2 compares the top eight categories in relation to these variables. Propositions derived from this table need to be treated with caution. However, in relation to work location there appears to be a tendency for workers not located in a social work base to be more negative than their colleagues. This is interesting to compare with the results in relation to social work department management, discussed in the previous chapter, where those in social work bases were shown to be more negative. It could be that those with a greater detachment from their employing department are more likely to perceive constraints as lying in relationships other than with their managers and are hence more prone to criticism of the politicians. The top three categories for the non social work base group are all negative: they see the Council as motivated by cosmetic public relations, as lacking clarity about the purposes of community work and as deliberately directing attention away from the 'real' issues. Only at fifth place in the rank order do they identify the Council as motivated to tackle deprivation. Workers in social work bases, however, put this in first place.

In relation to age there is no very obvious pattern of difference in terms of the overall negativeness or positiveness of younger or older workers, though there are some substantial differences in the ranking of particular categories, most notably in relation to the attachment of councillors to community care styles of work.

Table 9.2. Relative rank ordering of comment categories by age, sex, work location and professional qualification

| Category | All | Location | | Age (+ or - 32) | | Prof. Qual. | | Sex | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | S.W. Base | Non-S.W. Base | Older | Younger | CQSW | Non. CQSW | Women | Men |
| Do something about deprivation in A.P.T.s, etc. | 1 | 1 | 5 | 4 | 1 | 4 | 1 | 3 | 1 |
| Lack of clarity in role of C.W. | 1 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 5 | 1 | 2 |
| Facilitate communications between council and community | 3 | 2 | 6 | 1 | 5 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 5 |
| Lack of commitment to C.W. in contentious issues | 4 | 2 | 6 | 7 | 3 | 3 | 7 | 7 | 3 |
| Commitment and expectations of councillors vary | 5 | 2 | 8 | 3 | 5 | 2 | 5 | 3 | 5 |
| Public relations for the Council | 5 | 7 | 1 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 2 | 5 | 3 |
| To promote community care | 7 | 6 | 3 | 1 | 7 | 7 | 2 | 5 | 5 |
| To direct attention away from real issues | 8 | 8 | 3 | 7 | 8 | 7 | 8 | 8 | 8 |

Turning to qualifications, CQSW holders score slightly more highly on negative categories. Sex appears to be the least significant variable.

Workers' evaluation of their practice relative to the ascribed aspirations of the Regional Councillors.

a) Positive

Turning to an exploration of the actual activities of the workers which they believe would be valued by the Regional Councillors, Table 9.3 provides the rank order of comment categories by sample strata and for the group as a whole. Question 6a of the final interview schedule, to which this material relates, produced a wide range of comments averaging 2.8 per respondent.

The most popular types of comment suggest that the workers perceived the Council as valuing more conservative, non contentious styles of work which focussed generally on the use of the resources of the community to develop its own services. In turn, they are believed to value support from the workers in the provision of premises and amenities which will facilitate this. Thus the most popular category of comments is community care schemes. The comments represent 11.4% of the total and an expression of at least part of the views of 31% of the sample. The list varies in level of specificity but references to a range of groups including: the handicapped, elderly, alcholics, blind, and offenders, suggests a perception of community work derived from the kind of client group categories adopted in social work practice. Most of the groups would be seen as vulnerable and in need of support and it is interesting

Table 9.3

Rank order of activities thought to be valued by Strathclyde Regional Councillors by sample strata

| | C.W.A. | C.W. | S.C.W. | C.D.O. | All |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Comm. care & ser. schemes | Prov. of comm. premises & amenities | Work with other comm. dev. staff | Work with comm. elec. mbrs. & officers | Comm. care & serv. schemes |
| 2 | Advice & info. work | Comm. care & ser. schemes | Corporate working | Resource work | Prov. of comm. premises & amenities |
| 3 | IT/youth or childrens work | IT/youth or childrens work | Info. gathering & research work | Work with other comm. dev. staff | Corporate working |
| 4 | Corporate working | Resource work | Work with comm. elec. mbrs. & officers | Info. gathering & research work | IT/youth or childrens work |
| 5 | Prov. of comm. premises & amenities | Work with tenants assoc. | Work with single parents | Comm. care & service schemes | Resource work |
| 6 | Work with tenants assoc. | Work with the unemployed | | Written work - reports & recording | Info. gathering & research work |
| | Work with the unemployed | General work with comm. grps. | | | Advice & info. work |
| | Info. gathering & research work | Corporate working | | | |
| | Work with volunteer groups | Work to influence Dist. or Reg. Depts. | | | |
| | Work with the elderly | Comm. enterprise proj. | | | |
| | | Work with indiv. & families | | | |
| | | Projects giving good publicity | | | |

that work with these kinds of groups is thought to be more valued than work with more independent assertive kinds of community interests.

The second placed category - provision of community premises, facilities and amenities, runs community care close in popularity and can be regarded in many ways as the means by which the community care activity can be promoted. Comments of this kind are made by 26% of the sample. It is suggested that providing premises, facilities and amenities implies that a more passive, non-directive role for community work staff is seen as valued. Typical comments are: 'work to convert community flat for use by the handicapped'; 'work on area community transport scheme'; 'opening of centre to be run by local action group'. The category: resource work, which is in equal fourth place should be linked with the provision of community premises, facilities and amenities category, in second place, in that it relates to the provision of the means by which community group activities may be developed. The category contains two elements, the first being work to obtain funds for community work projects, the second being work in relation to resource centres where facilities such as typing, duplicating, printing or video services might be made available. Typical of the first sort of comment would be: 'making minor project grant applications for a variety of groups' and of the second 'work with Resource Centre steering group'.

It should be noted that the content analysis of workers' activities, discussed in Chapter 5, showed provision of community premises, facilities and amenities and, resource work to be the two most extensive activities. Thus, while their own view of the activities which they value, as revealed in Chapter 7, does not place these activities highly, this result does suggest that despite their frustration with the

Regional Council, as expressed earlier in this chapter, their activities are generally congruent with those that they believe the Council wishes them to undertake. It can be suggested, therefore, that workers' frustration and identification of areas of conflict with their employers relates more to what they would like to do than what they actually do. However, as material in Chapter 7 showed, and later material in Chapter 11 will show, overall these workers do not hold particularly radical aspirations for their practice.

Returning to the overall rank order of comment categories, in third place, representing comments made by 18.5% of the sample comes corporate working. Given a single council committee to handle community development services provided by the Council and the establishment of neighbourhood management and co-ordination projects, such as the Area Initiative Projects and Area Development Teams, it is hardly surprising that this is a popular category. However, given that the content analysis showed that most workers recorded little or no corporate working, the comments can be presumed to come from a particular minority group within the sample. This is demonstrated by the comments which generally refer directly to involvement in the Regional Council's local corporate management schemes. For example: 'work to service Area Development Team and other corporate management structures' or 'attendance at Area Initiative Project team'.

Work on intermediate treatment, youth work and children's work, which occupies equal fourth place in the rank order, returns the tenor of comments to a service delivery perspective. The comments, which are made by 16.7% of the sample, tend to emphasise play schemes and children's work rather than the other elements of the category.

In equal sixth place, comes the category : advice and information work, representing comments made by 14.8% of the sample (5.4% of the comments). This again suggests a perception of what the Council values which focuses on service provision and individualised work rather than collective action. Typical comments include: 'development of community responsibility for information centre'; 'welfare rights shop-front work'; 'making community aware of social services which are provided'.

Information gathering and research work occupies equal sixth place. Though the specific types of work vary, the implication can be made that most of this work would be valued because it provides an intelligence service to the Council about the areas of need and about the activities of the workers. As shown in Chapters 5 and 7 respectively, this is neither an extensive or highly valued activity by the workers. As indicated in the content analysis, preparation of material for Area Profiles for the Council was the most common focus of the activity and this is reinforced by the comments here.

Given the broad spread of comments in relation to this question, and the different rankings by different strata of the sample, it is worth persuing the rank order further than the top seven listed in Table 9.3. Position 8 in the rank order is occupied by two categories: work with tenants associations and, work to encourage community elected members and officials to work together. Comments in these categories are made by 13% of the sample. The two comments are, however, rather different in character. The latter is very closely in line with the category: corporate working, which occupies third place, but here the emphasis is on the involvement of the elected members and community groups rather than just inter-departmental working. Many comments relate to the

series of community conferences set up by Strathclyde Regional Council with community groups and voluntary organisations to assess progress in relation to the deprivation strategy. These coincided with the recording period and would not be a normal activity for community workers, but the significance attached to them again emphasises the workers' perceptions of the Council as valuing activities which keep it informed about comnmunity feelings.

Work with tenants' associations, is the first category on the list to refer to community groups which might adopt campaigning as well as service orientations to their work but, even here, many of the comments are hedged with qualifications. For example, one worker suggests the Council may value this kind of work because it 'takes the sting out of volatile groups' and another comments that 'only some Councillors' would value this kind of activity. The majority, however, simply expressed the view that work with tenants' associations is valued.

In tenth place comes work with the unemployed, representing comments made by 11% of the sample, whilst in equal eleventh place is work with other community development staff. In relation to the latter, the comments are all made by Seniors or Community Development Organisers and relate largely to the fulfillment of management and supervisory functions. Also in eleventh place is the category: good publicity projects. By this level in the rank order the comments only reflect comments made by 9.3% of the sample. The implication of this category is that the Council generally, and Councillors individually, value those aspects of community work activity which cast them in a favourable light. A typical example of these comments is: 'projects working with

local Councillors resulting in positive publicity, e.g., obtaining a mini-bus'.

Local enterprise work, that is: work relating to the promotion of local employment projects, co-operatives or community businesses, is in joint thirteenth place. If it is combined with the comments in the category: work with the umemployed, together they would rate in third place, representing comments of 18.5% of the sample. This possibly gives a more realistic picture of the importance which workers believe the Council attaches to employment issues.

The other category in thirteenth place is the category: work with individuals and families. Comments in this category imply more extensive detailed work than those under the heading advice and information work, but both can be seen as reflecting a direct, individualised service giving orientation to community work. Combined, these categories would also have moved up to third position.

In fifteenth position are five categories: general work with community groups; media work; work pertaining to Council; work to directly influence District or Regional Council departments; and written work, recording and report preparation. These represent comments of just three workers each. Remaining comments are made by just one or two workers.

The comments made in relation to this question have a high degree of homogeneity. They emphasise the kinds of activities which were described in the commentary on question 1, in Chapter 7, as belonging to an essentially conservative and consenual frame of reference for community work. They are service oriented strategies for community change which value self help highly, rather than strategies which make

demands for change on resource and power holders who both deliver and control the quality of public services in the community. Though there is an overall character to these comments, there are some interesting variations of emphasis between the four strata of the sample.

Whereas in previous questions more noticeable distinctions have been observed between Community Work Assistants and the other three groups, in this question more difference is apparent between the Community Development Organisers and Senior Community Workers as compared with the other two groups. In particular the categories: work to encourage community elected members and officials to work together and; work with other community development staff, are much more highly ranked. The former probably reflects the greater direct responsibility in relation to the community conferences, and the latter the particular perceptions appropriate to those carrying management and supervisory roles. Similarly, the lower rankings of categories such as: work to provide community premises and amenities; community care and service schemes and intermediate treatment, youth work and children's work probably reflect the greater distance of these two groups from direct involvement with the community, as demonstrated in Chapter 6. It is worth noting that in relation to work with the community the Councillors are thought to value similar activities to the Social Work Department managers, as discussed in the previous chapter. However, for none of the sample strata is there evidence that workers believe that the Councillors would value either work with other social work staff or with social work management. In this area at least there therefore appears to be tension between the activities that the workers believe the two groups to value.

Exploring the data in terms of the variables of age, sex, work location and qualifications some interesting variations occur. These findings are presented in Table 9.4.

Before examining differences between these sub-groups of workers it is worth noting the generally high degree of consistency between them in relation to community care activities, which rank first or second for every group. Differences in work location produce some interesting variations in the rank orders. Resource work, which, as has already been noted, is most often to support community care activities, is ranked more highly by workers in social work bases. The other activity identified as supportive to community care activity is provision of community premises and facilities. It may well be that the higher ranking of this by workers not located with other social work staff reflects the fact that their work bases are often community premises of the kind that councillors might wish to see provided. Despite the differences it is argued, however, that both groups believe councillors value resourcing functions.

The only other major variation relating to work location is the higher value thought by workers in non-social work bases to be given to corporate working. This may reflect an expectation on the part of workers located at greater distance from a particular service department that they should be engaging in collaborative activity with workers from other departments.

In relation to age, significant variations occur in relation to only two categories. The most notable being: work to encourage community, elected members and officials to work together, which ranks in first place for older workers but does not score at all for the younger group.

Table 9.4

Relative rank ordering of categories of valued activity in relation to age, sex, work, location and professional qualification (question 6a)

| | Rank Orders | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Work Location | | Age(+ or -32) | | Prof. Qual. | | Sex | |
| Category | All | S.W. base | Non S.W. base | Older | Younger | CQSW | Non CQSW | Female | Men |
| Community care & service schemes | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 |
| Prov. of comm. premises and amenities | 2 | 4 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 5 | 1 | 1 | 4 |
| Corporate working | 3 | 9 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 6 | 5 | 3 |
| IT/Youth & children | 4 | 4 | 4 | 9 | 3 | 6 | 5 | 3 | 8 |
| Resource Work | 4 | 2 | 9 | 5 | 4 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 8 |
| Information gathering and research | 6 | 3 | 6 | 6 | 4 | 1 | 8 | 6 | 4 |
| Advice and information work | 6 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 4 | 6 | 8 | 6 | 4 |
| Work with T.A.'s | 8 | 5 | 2 | 6 | 8 | 1 | 4 | 2 | 5 |
| Work to encourage comm. elected members and officials to work together | 8 | 4 | 6 | 1 | - | 6 | 3 | - | 2 |

It should be noted too that this category is also rated second overall by men but not at all by women though, as Chapter 4 indicated, there is little significant difference in age distribution of the sex groups. The related category: corporate working (which relates to collaboration between local authority officers only) is also rated more highly, though much less dramatically so, by men and older workers. It is of interest to speculate as to whether these values ascribed to councillors reflect roles that workers of different age and sex would believe themselves to be expected to play. This possibility is also worth considering in the other category where there is substantial variation in relation to age, which also appears to correlate in the same way with age: intermediate treatment, youth and children's work. It may be pushing it too far, given the general high rating of community care activities among all groups, but there does appear to be some degree of expectation that older and male workers should be involved in more politically delicate organisational activities whilst women and younger workers should be more service oriented. If this proposition has any validity, it may have as much to do with the self perceptions of the workers as it has to do with the views of councillors. It should be noted, as in previous chapters, however, that these findings have much more to do with the lack of correlation between sex and seniority. As noted earlier in this chapter Seniors and Community Development Organisers which are heavily male dominated strata and largely fall into the older group, rate corporate working and collaborative work between community, elected members and officers more highly than their colleagues.

The influence of type of qualification also appears to produce some variations. Most notably, CQSW holders believe that information and

advice work will be very highly valued by elected members though it is difficult to see why this might be the case. That non-CQSW holders, who are mainly community education/youth and community work qualified, should believe provision of community premises and facilities to be more highly valued might relate to a training which gives more emphasis to this sort of work than is the case in social work courses. Whether their lower ranking of corporate working could be explained in a similar way is even more open to question.

Workers' evaluation of their practice relative to the ascribed aspirations of Regional Councillors

b) Negative

Turning to the non-valued activities, Table 9.5 provides the rank order of comment categories for each sample strata and the workers as a whole. Two aspects of the results, in general, are worth noting before examining the comments in detail. Firstly, there is a relatively low number of comments compared with question 6A. There were 91 comments excluding 8 respondents who indicated that they did not think there was any aspect of their work which would not be valued. This represents 1.7 comments per respondent. Secondly, it is important to note the wide spread of comments and the relatively even distribution between categories. Even the most popular category accounts for only 9.9% of comments and reflects views expressed by just 16.7% of the sample. Additionally, it is worth noting that almost 42% of the comments are in categories representing just one or two respondents.

The most popular category is informal discussions. It is slightly difficult to be sure why this activity is felt not to be valued but the

Table 9.5

Rank order of activities not thought to be valued by Strathclyde Regional Councillors by sample strata

| | C.W.A. | C.W. | S.C.W. | C.D.O. | All |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Admin. and clerical wk. | Work with housing campaigns | Informal discussions | Work with other comm. dev. staff | Informal discussions |
| 2 | Work with indiv. and families | Informal discussions | | | Work with housing campaigns |
| 3 | Work on housing campaigns | Info. and advice wk. | | | Admin and clerical work |
| 4 | informal discussions | Admin. and clerical work | | | Work with other comm. dev. staff |
| 5 | Odd obligements | Work with the unemployed | | | General work with community groups |
| 6 | Travelling time | Work with Community Councils | | | Info. and advice work |
| 7 | Work with other comm. dev. staff | General work with comm. groups | | | Work with the unemployed |
| 8 | Corporate working | Unspec. work which challenges L.A. | | | Corporate working |
| | | Trade Union work | | | Written work - records and reports |
| | | Advocacy work | | | Work with S.W. colleagues - non-manag. |
| | | Work with forum of comm. groups | | | Work with indiv. and families |

comments lead the researcher to suggest that workers feel the purpose of such activity may be difficult for councillors to identify. It could also be that the workers themselves are uncertain about the value to be placed on this activity, though the category does not figure significantly in question 5B, discussed in Chapter 7, where workers identified non-valued activities in their own terms. The following are typical comments: 'Informal discussions, especially with social work colleagues': 'Informal discussions with staff, as opposed to formal supervision time': 'Time I spend just sitting talking to the elderly': 'The informal work generally': 'The informal discussions in the community'.

In equal second place, representing 13.9% of the sample (7.7% of comments), are two categories: administration and clerical work, and, work on housing campaigns. Administration is also a non-valued activity for workers themselves and the researcher suggests that workers believe councillors to share their frustration with an activity which seems to divert them from direct working in the community.

Work on housing campaigns has already been noted as a category which implies more aggressive collective action on the part of community groups. It is consistent with the earlier discussion, which suggested councillors value more consensual service based activity, that this category should appear high on the list of non-valued activity. This is illustrated by comments like: 'work on the rents issue because the nature of the problem is political' or 'work with issue based groups, especially housing, where this may lead to confrontation with the District Council'.

In equal fourth place, representing 5.5% of the comments and made by 9.3% of the sample come two categories; work with other community development staff, and general work with community groups. It is interesting in relation to the former that, in relation to activities thought to be valued, this was most popular amongst Community Development Organisers yet two Community Development Organisers also identified management tasks in relation to staff as unlikely to be valued. Two broad implications can be drawn from these comments, firstly, that councillors might regard this activity as a waste of time and, secondly, that they might feel meetings between community development workers are used to usurp councillors' authority in determining the policy for community work. Typical of the first sort of comment is: 'time spent in management of a member of staff finding it difficult to accept minimal criteria for being a local authority worker', whilst of the second is: 'work with colleagues rationalising our own work and establishing policy, because the councillors are the ones who see themselves as doing the policy making and we are there to do the implementation'.

The category: general work with community groups, is a residual composite category. While some comments like 'Councillors will not value me attending meetings with the community', are really rather difficult to understand, most suggest that what is not valued is the time involved in supporting and developing the capacities of community groups. The implication is that councillors do not understand the process of promoting self confident group activity and resent the amount of support work at both emotional and practical levels which may be required. (This may also be an explanation for the ranking of informal

discussions in first place). A further aspect of this category is the concern that community workers' relations with groups may diminish the role of the councillor. Illustrative of the former is the comment that councillors will not value: 'The support work fostering the development of community groups in the early stages of their activity, e.g., photo copying, running off leaflets, delivering letters, getting people to meetings, i.e., the process is not valued'. The following comment illustrates the latter: 'Work with the community groups which finds solutions to problems by bypassing the councillor'.

Work with the unemployed, and information and advice work, rank in equal sixth position. Since both categories ranked highly among activities thought to be valued, the potential contradictions have to be explored. In relation to the unemployed this is difficult to understand but the implication of two of the four comments is that it is the style of approach which would not be valued and, of a further one, that it is the poor rate of progress rather than the goals and value of the work which would be questioned. In relation to the advice and information category, three of the four comments identify specific aspects of the work rather than the general category and two of these indicate that it is work which places demands on, or embarrasses, councillors which is not valued. This suggests little contradiction with the earlier results where, in any case, twice as many comments constituted the category.

In equal eighth place, but representing only 5.6% of the comments, alongside three other categories comes the category: working with individuals and families. It is interesting that a similar proportion of respondents believe this to be a valued as a non-valued activity by the Council. Also in eighth place comes the category: corporate

working, which scored highly as a valued activity, the category: written work, recording and report preparation, and the category: work with social work colleagues.

The single comments in the categories: community care and service work, and resource work, and the complete absence of comments in the categories: work to provide community premises and amenities, and: work to encourage community, elected members and officials to work together, demonstrate the general compatibility of the results in relation to valued and non-valued activities.

The wide spread of comments, relative to the total number made, reduces the significance of comparisons between sample strata. Community Development Organisers are particularly concerned with their relations with other community development staff and Community Workers particularly emphasise housing campaigns and more conflictual styles of working.

Comparison of rank order of categories in relation to the variables of age, sex, work location and qualifications produces a few interesting differences. These findings are set out in Table 9.6.

One of the more interesting findings is the lower level of concern expressed by CQSW holders about informal discussions. This may suggest that the emphasis on counselling roles in their training gives them a clearer sense of the purpose of such activity and therefore greater confidence in defending it. Why they should be so much more concerned than their non-CQSW colleagues about work with the unemployed is more difficult to explain but may also relate to different emphasis in training.

Tabel 9.6

Relative rank ordering of comment categories of non-valued activities in relation to age, sex working location and qualifications

| Category | All | Location | | Age | | Qual. | | Sex | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | S.W. base | Non S.W. base | Oldr. | Yngr. | CQSW | Non CQSW | Women | Men |
| Informal discussions | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 1 |
| Work on housing campaigns | 2 | 3 | 2 | - | 1 | 1 | 2 | 4 | 1 |
| Admin. and clerical work | 2 | 1 | - | 2 | 3 | 1 | 5 | 1 | 5 |
| Work with other C.D. staff | 4 | 4 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 1 | 6 | 4 | 3 |
| Gen. work with comm. groups | 4 | 5 | 2 | 4 | 3 | 5 | 2 | 5 | 3 |
| Info. and advice work | 6 | 5 | 5 | 3 | 7 | - | 2 | 4 | 5 |
| Work with the unemployed | 6 | 7 | 2 | 4 | 6 | 1 | 6 | 7 | 3 |

Other notable variations occur between social work based and non-social work based staff in relation to work with the unemployed. A similar pattern is evident between men and women in this category. Administrative and clerical work seem to be of more concern to social work based, CQSW and women workers than their colleagues.

Comment

At the start of this chapter the complexity of the relationships between councillors and community workers was noted, but it was recognised that the particular dispositions of each to the other, and the particular circumstances of their interactions, would be crucial in determining the nature of their relationship. The research has not examined directly the attitudes of elected members to the community workers employed by the Regional Council. However, it is not unreasonable to suggest that the policy documents they approve, even though drafted and significantly influenced by officers, will give an indication of their collective dispositions towards community work. These were discussed in Chapter 2. Comparison of that material with this evidence suggests that the tendency to believe councillors hold relatively conservative views of community work would not appear to be wholly justified, though the policy documents contain some confusion. Part of the problem may be, however, that the workers do not experience the elected members collectively but as individuals operating either as local representatives or as key members of committees with an interest in the local issues under discussion. It is quite possible therefore that, as Corina has suggested[2], community workers are meeting elected members in a variety of different roles which may lead them to operate

in ways which are not necessarily consistent with specific policies in relation to community work. In a highly complex, multiple goal, organisation, such as a Regional Council, serving two and a half million people, this is hardly surprising. What is more surprising is that, given the degree of belief that there is potential and actual tension and conflict between workers and elected members, more time is not being given to direct development of dialogue than the network analysis of Chapter 6 reveals.

In seeking explanations for the tensions which are apparent between the workers and the elected members, a possibility worthy of consideration is that it arises from the degree to which the functions of community workers and councillors overlap. Given that the predominant form of contact between the two groups appears to occur in the context of discussions of local community problems, councillors are likely to be operating primarily in their roles as ward representatives rather than as members of council committees which carry managerial and policy functions in relation to particular services throughout the Region or District. As Hampton[3] suggests:

> "The classical liberal theory of representative democracy affirms that the M.P. or local councillor is the communicating link between the governed and the governors. The elected representative is expected not only to present the complaints of his constituents, and to remedy the injustices they suffer, but also to embrace their opinions."

Though Hampton goes on to say: 'Such a simple view has little relevance to mass democracy', it can be argued that this perception of role is one to which many elected members appear to cling, despite the fact that rational assessment of their behaviour indicates that a vast range of influences other than those of ward residents actually inform their role

playing. Most significant among these are the influences of party policy, the party caucus, membership of particular committees serving the electorate as a whole, influence of the officer system in advising councillors on options open to them, the influence of the personal ideology/values of the members, the constraints imposed by countervielling political influences and the status of the particular member within the party or committee.

The contention that elected members may see themselves in this classical representative function can be supported by reference to the report of the Policy Review Group on Community Development Services[4] in Strathclyde, which was the product of the deliberations of elected members, and formed the basis for development of community work policy in the Region. Having already identified one of the key factors affecting the disadvantaged areas of the Region as: 'a sense of estrangement from councillors and M.Ps', the document later states:

> "The role of the councillor is to represent the community but he has been inadequately equipped to do this in a variety of ways".

It would not be reasonable to argue that the document fails to recognise the complexity of councillors' roles but emphasis is clearly given to their local representative function. The report states:

> "It is crucially important to community development that councillors, as public representatives, are seen to matter, and an increased role at policy making level would complement the increased role at local level which we propose in our recommendations".

The overlap between the perceptions of elected members of their role and that of community workers is demonstrable by reference to the history of community work in the U.K., reviewed in the first chapter.

When the 1968 Gulbenkian[5] report stated: 'In short, community work is a means of giving life to local democracy', it was clearly indicating not only the political nature of community work but, in a sense too, it was indicating a concern about the apparent failures of local representative democracy.

This concern with compensation for deficiencies of the local democratic process has been a consistent theme of literature in community work in the U.K. over the last two decades. Thomas,[6] for example, describes community work as being concerned with a: 'deliberate policy of franchisal development' which is concerned with working with community groups to promote: 'political responsibility', 'political significance' and 'political competence'. His emphasis is on minority and disadvantaged groups which have become estranged from the political process and this was a central problem recognised by Strathclyde Regional Council in the development of its community work policy. Elsewhere, Thomas, writing with Henderson and Jones,[7] suggests:

> "Within society, community work occupies a marginal position in relation to major political economic and social welfare institutions and forces. Community workers tend, on the whole, to work with marginal groups, particularly those left with little in the way of resources, status, power and ambition.... Community workers may be seen as people who help others to cross boundaries that they themselves invariably remain outside of. This interjacent location of community work is implicitly conveyed in some of the more common role descriptions such as mediator, broker, advocate, facilitator and interpreter."

These roles are a familiar concern in the training of community workers and can be regarded as generally acknowledged features of community work. For example, in discussing the skills required of community workers, the Central Council for Education and Training in

Social Work curriculum study[8] on the teaching of community work refers to the importance of 'political skills' and states:

> "Skill in coping with the tensions and crises that arise in the process of intervention negotiation and advocacy and in the identification of issues involving the use and distribution of power will be required in a variety of situations in formal organisations, in informal meetings with colleagues or with local residents in the neighbourhood".

Given the overlap between the roles of community workers in stimulating democratic participation or more direct forms of campaigning by minority interests, and the local representative functions of elected members, it is not surprising that there is some degree of tension. In his review of community work in the Social Work Department of the Regional Council,[9] the Director of Social Work sought to clarify the relationship in order to minimise tensions. He says:

> "The roles of community workers and local members are mutually supportive...The community worker in assisting the community to identify its needs and interests is in a position to contribute to the effectiveness of the formal political representation of political interests exercised by the local member. Conversely, the community worker, as an agent of the Council's social strategy, can look to members to support initiatives taken in line with this objective.... The potential exists, however, for misunderstanding."

Though acknowledging the potential tensions the report appears to attempt to curtail the functions of community workers when it states:

> "...<u>the community worker's role is never that of representing or speaking on the behalf of the community</u>".

Such a limitation, whilst it may be an understandable attempt to differentiate the functions of elected representatives from those of community workers, is not consistent with roles that have been prescribed for them in much community work literature. This is not to

argue that representative roles have been regarded as the central function of community work but to acknowledge that they are an accepted part of the repertoire of the community worker. Butcher[10] et al, for example, discuss the role of community workers under the headings of: 'enabler', 'broker', 'advocate' and 'activist', whilst Henderson and Thomas[11] talking about transactions between community groups and other systems refer to the worker roles of 'delegate' and 'plenipotentiary'. Given that such terms clearly indicate that workers would expect to carry representative roles to some degree, tension with the formal political system is likely to be endemic.

The ambivalence revealed in the comments of the Strathclyde workers with regard to elected members illustrates the complexity of the relationship. In particular, it suggests that community workers may see themselves sometimes as the collaborative allies of elected members, at others as in direct conflict with them about the definition of, and appropriate responses to, local needs. It is suggested, however, that the limited degree of direct contact between them may imply that the way workers see the relationship is not always informed by a direct knowledge of the actual dispositions of councillors towards them. Further, the general lack of evidence of extensive and analytical work by these community workers about community problems and the dynamics at work in promoting them and inhibiting change (see Chapter 5), also suggests that attitudes may be derived from generalisations about councillor behaviour rather than accurate information. Twelvetrees[12] comment on relationships between elected members and community workers may indicate the kinds of assumptions which are common amongst this group of workers when he states:

> "Notwithstanding the low poll at local elections, most councillors see themselves as being elected to make decisions for the whole electorate. Consequently, many are rather suspicious of community organisations, which have no similar mandate or responsibility. They will often see you, the community worker, as a threat because you are involved in activity which may challenge them. They can be very touchy and easily alienated....".

My contention is not that such a view may not have validity but that, before acting, workers should have engaged in a thorough investigation of the way that particular elected members play their roles and, in the process of their work, should be reviewing the assessment. This individual assessment should be set in the context of an appreciation of the collective dispositions of the Council and the relationship between the two.

Whilst in particular local circumstances experienced by these workers there are no doubt difficult relationships with elected members, the overall view that they take, as revealed in policy documents, ought to provide a more sympathetic environment for the practice of community work than is common in many other local authorities. It may be, as has been suggested, that the parallel character of the two roles will always produce friction. However, since community workers in local authority employment are ultimately accountable to elected members, it is in their interests to attempt to negotiate the relationship with more clarity than the evidence of this study appears to suggest.

Summary

In relation to the workers' views on what the councillors hoped their community work would achieve, the responses suggest a very high degree of uncertainty about the purposes and motivations of the Council

in sponsoring community work activity. One of the two most popular comment categories, reflecting views expressed by 31.5% of the sample, is that it is difficult to identify the objectives of the Council. This response is regarded as a neutral position. On the positive side, in equal first place, comes the comment that the Council sees community work as leading to anti-deprivation activity as laid out in the Council's policy documents. The third most popular comment is similar in emphasising the role of community work in facilitating communications between the Council and community about needs. However, there is also a series of very negative comments about the Council's views. A quarter of the workers indicate that they feel the Council lacks commitment to work which deals with contentious issues or adopts conflictual tactics. They seem to hold the view that the Council has an essentially consensual orientation to community work. Further negative comments suggest that the Council is concerned with more cosmetic than real changes and occasionally vociferous phrases like 'keeping the natives quiet' are used to describe their motives.

The balance between positive, neutral and negative comments is of particular interest. Of the comments made, the researcher regards 38.3% as positive, 32.9% as neutral and 28.9% as clearly negative. These results would suggest a rather ambivalent relationship between the workers and their sponsors.

There is little substantial variation in attitudes between the strata of the sample. If anything the two more senior groups are slightly more negative in their views. The high level of negative and neutral comments cannot simply be explained in terms of the frustrations

of workers with radical aspirations working in an unsympathetic environment.

In relation to analysis employing the variables: age, sex, work location and qualifications, the most interesting finding is an apparent tendency for those not located in a social work base to feel more negative about elected members.

The comments in relation to the aspects of their work that the respondents believed the Council would value highly have a high degree of homogeneity. They emphasise the kinds of activity which belong to an essentially conservative and consensual frame of reference for community work. They are service orientated strategies for community change which value self-help highly, rather than strategies which make demands for change on resource and power holders who both deliver and control the quality of public services in the community. Thus the most popular comment category is community care schemes, followed by the provision of community premises and amenities which are largely seen as facilitating community care.

The third most popular category is corporate working and is a reflection of policies in relation to neighbourhood management and development. Other important categories thought to be highly valued are: IT, youth and children's work; resource work; advice and information work; information gathering and research, and work to encourage community, elected members and officials to work together. The first category potentially involving more campaigning orientations is work with tenants' associations, but even here many comments are hedged with qualifications such as: 'this work takes the sting out of volatile groups.'

The only significant variation in response between sample strata is that Community Development Organisers and Senior Community Workers rank: work with other community development staff and, work to encourage community, elected members and officials to work together, more highly.

In relation to activities that it is thought would not be valued highly by the Council, there is a very wide spread, though a relatively small number of comments. However, they are generally consistent with those in relation to the first half of the question.

Exploring the evidence in terms of breakdown by age, sex, work location or qualification, it is very tentatively suggested that male and older workers may feel that they should be involved in more politically delicate organisational activities whilst women and younger workers are more service oriented.

The most popular negative category is: informal discussions. This relates to the unplanned contacts in the time budget analysis and may suggest that workers do not believe councillors would see the necessity for it or that they have doubts about its value as an activity themselves. In second place is administration and clerical work. The researcher suspects that this reflects an over-estimation of the actual amount of time spent on the activity. Work on housing campaigns is in equal second place and is thought not to be valued as it implies more aggressive collective action on the part of the community groups. Other activities thought not to be valued by councillors are: work with other community development staff; general work with community groups; and work with the unemployed. Some of these are difficult to interpret. The first is possibly a concern that councillors might regard the activity as unproductive or that it usurps their authority in policy

making, while the second may indicate that workers doubt the understanding of councillors of the process of community work. In relation to the unemployed, it is more the style of work than the group on which it focusses which is of concern.

Significant patterns within the sample strata are not discernable. In relation to the aspects of their work which the workers do not believe would be valued by elected members, CQSW holders appear to be less concerned about the time spent in informal discussions.

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# Chapter 10

## Community workers' views of the community groups

### Introduction

In a completely non-directive approach to community work the commitment of workers to the will of the groups with whom they work would be absolute. It is doubtful, however, if such an approach has ever been adopted for workers have always reserved the right to dissociate themselves from ethically unacceptable activities. It is certainly the case though that, as discussed in the opening chapter, community workers have become increasingly inclined to place greater emphasis on their own values and ideologies in deciding with whom they will work and in what way. (The next chapter shows the significance that this group of workers attaches to this factor.) This shift varies greatly between individual workers and is in all cases tempered by the influence of the dispositions of the consumers and the sponsors of community work practice. Just as community workers have the sanction of withdrawal of support to community groups whose activities are not acceptable to them, so, equally, do community groups have the option of rejection of the worker or sponsors, the withdrawal of funding or other organisational measures to curb activities. Community work practice, then, involves a complex set of boundary negotiations between the three parties to the process which critically influence what will actually be set as practice goals. These goals are obviously also crucially affected by the motivation, capacity, opportunity and resources

available to tackle the targets for change, whilst also being influenced by the assessment of the capacity of the targets to resist change.

In approaching the material in this chapter it is important to be aware of the complexity of the process of determining what community work will actually take place. In the previous three chapters insight has been gained into the aspirations of the workers for their own practice. Though this is discussed further, using other evidence, in Chapter 11, it is already apparent that the sample examined in this research hold a variety of ideological and value dispositions towards their work. Similarly it will be apparent that their assessments of the aspirations of their managers and the Regional Council for their work indicates that many workers believe there to be inherant tensions between themselves and their sponsors. In this chapter we examine their view of the aspirations of the community groups with whom they work and their beliefs as to the value which the groups place on the work that they undertook during the recorded month. Comparison of these findings with the previous material provides a basis for understanding the workers' perceptions of the overall interactions which largely determine what they do.

The evidence for this chapter is drawn from questions 4 and 8 of the final interview schedule. (See Appendix 3) The former was: 'what do you think the members of the community groups with whom you work hope your community work will achieve?' The latter was divided into two parts, the first asking what aspects of their work during the recorded month the workers thought the community groups with whom they worked would value most highly relative to their ascribed aspirations

identified in question 4, the second asking what aspects of their work they thought would be valued least highly.

The procedures for the analysis of the material were the same as those for the previous three chapters. Recorded comments were categorised into qualitative groups, quantified and rank ordered as a proportion of the comments made. The results have been explored in relation to the whole sample and each of its sub strata. They have also been examined in terms of the variables of age (above or below the mean age of 32 years), sex, work location (those sharing a base with other social work staff compared with those who do not) and professional qualification (Certificate of Qualification in Social Work holders compared with those with other professional qualification - mainly Youth and Community or Community Education Diplomas).

Before examining the evidence in relation to the way that the workers perceive the interests of the community groups with whom they work, it is worth reminding ourselves of the level and kind of contact that each group of workers has with community groups (see Chapter 6). Significantly higher proportions of contact time are spent with members of the community (mostly community group members) by Community Work Assistants and Community Workers (50.7% and 45.9% respectively) than by Community Development Organisers and Seniors (15.6% and 22.1% respectively). The first two groups have a more consistent development role with particular groups and are therefore much more likely to feel a sense of loyalty, or possibly even accountability, to the interests of the organisations of the community.

Workers' views of the aspirations of community groups for their work

Exploring the general aspirations first, the workers were asked to indicate what they thought the community groups with whom they worked hoped community work would achieve. The question provoked the highest absolute number of comments, it was also the one which produced the most consistent pattern of response.

Over a quarter of the respondents commented on the difficulty of responding in general terms to the question given the variations in the outlook of the groups and the individual group members with whom they worked. In framing the question this was recognised to be a difficulty and may in part have conditioned the nature of the response. However, it was felt to be reasonable to try to obtain some sense of the kinds of objectives which workers believed their client groups hoped could be attained. In broad terms the researcher is satisfied that, despite variations in detail between groups being difficult to accommodate, a picture which provides a realistic contrast with responses in relation to the other three parties to the community work process has been obtained.

Examining the rank order of categories of comment, one is outstanding in the regularity with which its constituent comments occurred. Indeed the category represents 29.2% of the comments but more importantly is a comment made by no less than 83.3% of the sample. The category simply indicates that what community groups want to achieve through the activities they undertake with the community worker is a resolution to the particular problems which have brought them into being. It might be argued that such a statement is self evident but the nature of the problems specified in these answers indicates a very

interesting feature of community groups concerns in that the issues which are described appear to indicate self interested and essentially parochial concerns. This is not to be deprecated as, given the kinds of problems faced in the disadvantaged areas of the Region, such concerns are of great importance and undoubted legitimacy. Nonetheless it is interesting to contrast more limited aspirations believed to be held by members of community groups with the broader aspirations which workers indicated they held for the community groups, as revealed by the responses to question 1, discussed in Chapter 7.

The second most common category, again reflecting the views of a substantial proportion of the sample (41%), is a slightly indirect answer to the question in that, rather than defining the achievements which are hoped for, respondents have commented instead on the role that members of groups expect workers to perform. The roles specified range from passive to highly active and are of interest in revealing the kind of expectations which workers believe their consumer groups to have of them. Roles identified were: 'enabler'; 'supporter'; 'ally'; 'organiser'; 'resource provider'; 'stirrer'; 'advocate'; '(super) fixer'; 'clerical service provider'.

In third place comes the comment, already referred to, indicating the difficulty of providing a generalised answer to the question when the hopes of groups change over time with changing experiences, levels of worker contact and so on. This commment is noted and its value recognised, though it might be dangerous to operate on premises of this kind which may be used to justify lack of clarity of goal definition. While goals certainly vary over time with changing circumstances and are not consistently held by all participants to the process, it is

nonetheless desirable to have some sense as to what sorts of ends are valued by consumers on an aggregate basis.

The fourth category expresses the confidence of some workers in the independence of community groups, though whether such a hope would be consistent with the roles such as fixer, resource provider, advocate or organiser, as identified in the second ranked category, is questionable. Comments here refer to the members of community groups hoping that they will: 'come to stand on their own feet'; 'do things for themselves'; or 'resist takeover by the community worker'.

The aspirations of groups to obtain direct financial aid is considered important by 18.5% of the sample and is fifth in rank order. The notion that community workers should channel resources to the community also arises in responses discussed in Chapters 8 and 9, though fewer respondents make the comment and the funds tend to be seen there more as a basis for development of services to complement those of the local authority than for direct provisions by the community itself. Typical of comments here is: 'the members of community groups hope they will receive financial aid to develop services'. The most common sources of finance specified were Urban Aid and Section 12 Social Work (Scotland) Act grants.

The top five categories account for the substantial majority of the comments made. Other not infrequent comments refer to: 'hopes for a higher level of community participation'; 'a more sensitive response from local government'; 'the development of individual as well as group capacities to tackle problems'; and the hope that 'the community will develop a wider perspective on issues and problems not exclusive to their own community'. The emphasis of the remaining comments, however,

is either on the quality of the relationship between the group and the community it seeks to represent or the group and the resource holder it seeks to influence.

As a whole, the responses to the question appear to indicate that the workers' view the community groups as having generally limited and localised aspirations for change. They also appear to take a conservative view of the aspirations of the groups. Only 4.4% of the comments made suggest radical aspirations. Only one worker refers to the idea that workers might be accountable to community groups and one to groups aspiring to achieve change in the economic and political structures of society. Only three refer to group members wishing to look beyond the boundaries of their own community and its issues.

The homogeneity of response in general is also reflected in the lack of any significant variation between the sample strata in relation to this question.

Results in relation to the variables of age, sex, work location and professional qualification are generally similarly consistent as Table 10.1 shows. Three points are worthy of note. Firstly, workers located alongside social work staff appear to regard financial aid as being seen as more important than their colleagues. This may be because those not located with social workers are often operating from community premises for which finance has already been made available. Secondly, younger workers and CQSW holders seem to regard a greater degree of community participation as more important to community groups. Thirdly, the greater belief among male workers that community groups aspire to develop wider perspectives on issues which they face may reflect the greater influence of ideological factors on this group (see Chapter 11)

Table 10.1 Relative rank order of ascribed aspirations for community groups for the achievement achievement of community work by age, sex, qualification and work location

Rank Order

| | All | Work Location | | Age | | Qualification | | Sex | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | S.W. | Non S.W. | Younger | Older | CQSW | Non CQSW | M | F |
| Solution to their problems | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Role of Worker | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Change with time | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 6 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| Stand on own feet | 4 | 5 | 3 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 5 | 4 | 4 |
| Financial aid | 5 | 4 | 9 | 5 | 5 | - | 3 | 5 | 4 |
| More comm. participation | 6 | 6 | 5 | 4 | - | 3 | 8 | 7 | 4 |
| More sensitivity from local Gov. Dept. | 6 | 6 | 5 | 7 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 7 | 4 |
| Dev. of indiv. capacities | 8 | 8 | 5 | 8 | 7 | - | 6 | 7 | 8 |
| Dev. wider perspective on issues | 8 | 8 | 5 | 8 | 7 | 3 | 9 | 6 | - |

and therefore reflect a projection of their hopes on to community groups.

Overall, the view adopted by the workers of community group aspirations is more conservative than their own (see Chapter 7) but suggests a consistency with the actual activities they undertake as discussed in Chapter 5.

Workers' evaluation of their practice relative to the ascribed aspirations of the community groups with which they work - valued activities.

Turning to the actual work undertaken in the recorded month, the activities thought to be valued by community groups are presented in rank order by sample strata in Table 10.2. The comments here tend to reinforce the impression that the workers regard the orientation of community groups as both parochial and conservative. Question 8a on which this material is based attracted 166 comments, a rate of more than three per respondent.

The outstanding category is resource work, which accounts for 15% of the comments and is made by no less that 46% of the sample. The respondents clearly believe the community groups to value the work which they have been doing to provide financial support and other resources for them. More than half the comments specify financial aid and it is reasonable to assume that many of the others infer this. The implication of this category is that workers believe that groups see them as a way of obtaining the means by which they will pursue their chosen activities. Typical examples of comments in this category are: 'involvement which leads directly to gaining resources, grants etc.';

Group 10.2

Rank order of activities thought to be valued by community groups by stample strata

| | C.W.A. | C.W. | S.C.W. | C.D.O. | All |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Advice & info. work | Resource Work | Advice and info. work | Resource work | Resource work |
| 2 | Resource work | Gen. work with comm. groups | Gen. work with comm. groups | Advice & info. work | Advice & info. work |
| 3 | Gen. work with comm. groups | Prov. of comm. prem. & amenities | Resource work | Gen. work with comm. groups | Gen. work with comm. groups |
| 4 | Prov. of comm. prem. & amenities | Work with housing campaigns | Prov. of comm. prem. & amenities | | Prov. of comm. prem. & amenities |
| 5 | IT/Youth and childrens work | Advice & info. work | | | Work with housing campaigns |
| 6 | Work to influ. Dist. & Reg. Depts. | IT/Youth & childrens work | | | IT/Youth & childrens work |
| 7 | Work with indiv. & families | Work with tenants assocs. | | | Work with indiv. & families |
| | | Work with the unemployed | | | Media work |
| | | Media work | | | Work to influence Dist. & Reg. Depts. |
| | | Work with indiv. & families | | | |

'letters saying they are getting grants, buses etc.'; 'discussions with the District Council on extra cash for the area'.

In the second place also with a very high number of comments is the category: advice and information work. This represents 14% of the comments and reflects opinion expressed by 43% of the sample. It should be noted that this category in question 8 represents a rather different orientation to advice and information work than that identified in the previous three chapters, for here comments relate mainly to the role of advising and informing community groups rather than individuals. The comments have been placed in this category because they emphasise that the worker provides advice and information, however, there is a strong case for placing most of the comments in the category: general work with community groups, which comes third in the rank order. If those comments concerned solely with individual information and advice work were the only ones included in the category, there would be just three placing the category fourteenth in the rank order. Adding those concerned with advice to groups to those in the general work with community groups category, there would be 39 comments in the category representing 24% of the comments made and putting it in first place. However, categorised as at present in Table 10.2 the category: general work with community groups represents 11.5% of the comments, 35% of the sample. The comments in the category refer to a variety of roles which the worker plays which are valued - supporter, organiser, motivator - but, above all, it is the presence of the worker at group meetings which appears to be believed to be valued by group members.

Typical comments in relation to advice and information work are: 'Giving them the right information on how the system works - Regional

Council, District Council, DHSS, etc.': 'Providing information on advice strategies - ways of tackling problems': 'Giving direct advice to groups and acting as a sounding board for people's ideas': 'Welfare rights work': Whilst in relation to general work with community groups examples would be: 'Attending formal meetings of groups and giving them support in their actions': 'Direct contact with groups to give them support': 'Workers' ability to organise the groups, raise enthusiasm in the area and provide impetus': 'Preparing and arranging publicity material for groups'.

In fourth place, representing 27.8% of the comments and 9% of the sample comes the category: provision of community premises, facilities and amenities. This category is very closely allied to resource work but specifies the provision of physical facilities for community use, mainly buildings or transport. Typical comments here include: 'Support with community transport': 'Acquisition of a mini bus': 'Work with the Burgh Hall Chairperson on getting the hall open for use': 'Involvement with the Area Leisure and Recreation Centre': 'Discussion on proposed area centre'.

All four of the leading categories bear close relation to one another in their emphasis on supporting the process of community group activity. Combined they represent 49.5% of all the comments made. This again reinforces the impression that workers regard the groups as essentially self interested.

Two categories occupy fifth place but there is a considerable reduction in the size of categories ranked five and below compared with the leading four. They contain 8 comments (4.8% of the sample). The categories are: work with housing compaigns and : intermediate

treatment, youth or children's work. Most of the comments in the former appear to relate to campaigns of specific groups, whilst in the latter there is an equal division between youth and children's work. Both categories continue the monopoly of the rank order by activities which facilitate directly the work of community groups. Typical of comments in the former category are: 'Campaign for dry homes - getting external consultancy support and advice': 'Dampness campaign': 'Public meeting with Shelter group on housing missive': 'Support on 49th week rent and rates issue'. In relation to the latter the following are illustrative: 'Support to the voluntary youth worker and preparation of work for the Playscheme': 'Work with the Playscheme which is seen as an opportunity for everyone to get together'.

In place seven came three categories each with 3.6% of comments (11.1% of the sample). The category media work has hardly figured significantly in relation to other questions but, following the trend for servicing roles to community groups to rank highly, it scores significantly here. The emphasis is on production of newspapers and newsletters rather than other forms of media work. The category: work to directly influence Regional and District Council Departments, takes a slightly different tack in emphasising advocacy roles for workers on behalf of groups, nevertheless the concern is still with servicing their interests. Typical examples are: 'the group see me as being able to push the housing department: 'My liaison between groups and Departments, e.g. housing and social work': 'Linking to other Departments, e.g. Architects and Estates': 'Liaison for group with the housing department over modernisation, etc.'

The remaining category in seventh place: work with individuals and families is distinctly different in that here attention is given to meeting particular needs of members of the community rather than the groups themselves. One worker comments: 'because we are employed by Social Work it is assumed that we are interested in individual problems'.

Remaining comment categories contain five of less comments. In tenth place is administration and clerical work. Whilst this is largely seen as a frustrating activity by the workers themselves, some workers suggest that the groups value the activity in so far as it supports their own functioning.

With four comments each are three categories occupying eleventh place in the rank order. They are, respectively, the categories: work with tenants associations; work with the unemployed; and work with forum and networks of community groups. The focus is still on particular kinds of group activity. The relatively low ranking of collaborative work between groups compared with its ranking by community work staff themselves is worthy of note. This reinforces the view that collaborative, inter-neighbourhood or city wide groupings are an aspiration of workers rather than seen as desired by the groups.

Some of the categories with very low scores are of interest for their lack of popularity. Work with individual activists, for example, might have been expected to rank more highly, whilst low rankings of aspects like corporate working and work with social work colleagues are more predictable. The low score for community care projects may also be of interest though it could be that much of the resourcing work, would

lead into these kinds of activities without them being specifically mentioned.

Overall, the overwhelming evidence is that the workers believe that the groups primarily value work which supports them in the pursuit of their own interests. The activities involved are the ones shown in the content analysis in Chapter 5 to be most prevalent, especially for Community Workers and Community Work Assistants. Whatever they may feel about the limitations of the aspirations of the groups therefore, the workers do concentrate heavily on their concerns. The work considered to be valued by the community groups largely excludes work by the staff in relation to their own department and work to directly fulfil policy objectives of the Regional Council. In relation to the latter though, the aspirations of community groups may coincidentally fulfil some of the Council's policy objectives.

Comparison of the sample strata does not indicate major variations between sub groups, though Community Workers do account for all but one of the comments in relation to work with housing campaigns, ranked in fifth place.

Given the predominance of the top four categories in the overall comments, it can be seen from Table 10.3 that the variables of age, sex, work location and professional qualification produce few significant differences between these sub-groups. It is worth noting that the ranking of: housing campaigns, is not only dominated by Community Workers but also by Community Workers located in a social work base. The ranking of: work to influence District or Regional Council Departments, in the top four categories by men and older workers is also

Table 10.3

Relative rank orders of activities thought to be valued by community groups by: age, sex, work location and professional qualification

Rank Order

| | Location | | | Age | | Qualification | | Sex | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | All | S.W. | Non S.W. | Younger | Older | CQSW | Non CQSW | Wmn. | Men |
| Resource Work | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 |
| Advice and info. work | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 3 |
| General work with comm. gps. | 3 | 2 | 4 | 4 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 4 | 1 |
| Prov. of comm. premises and amenities | 4 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 4 |
| Work with housing campaigns | 5 | 5 | - | 6 | 7 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 4 |
| IT/Youth and childrens work | 5 | 6 | 6 | 5 | - | 5 | 6 | 5 | 4 |
| Work with individuals and families | 7 | 6 | - | 7 | - | - | 7 | - | 4 |
| Media work | 7 | - | 6 | 7 | - | 5 | 7 | - | 4 |
| Work to influence District & Regional Depts. | 7 | - | - | - | 4 | - | 7 | - | 4 |

worthy of note. However, consistency is the main feature of these results.

Workers' evaluation of their practice relative to the ascribed aspirations of the community groups with which they work - non-valued activities.

The views of the workers in relation to activities which would not be valued by the community groups are generally characterised by the fact that they do not relate directly to meeting group needs. Table 10.4 places the categories in rank order by sample strata.

In first place in the rank order is the category: work with other community development staff. This comment is made by 26% of the sample and represents 11.6% of the comments. There appears to be a widespread belief that work with colleagues is not seen as a valuable way of spending time. By implication, from the responses to the previous question, the time would be seen as better spent working directly with the groups. This view is confirmed by examination of one of the categories occupying joint second place. The category: Lack of availability, represents comments by 20% of the sample. The workers are of the view that the groups do not value any activity which takes them away from contact with the group. The category: time not spent in the area, in 9th place with 6 comments, and the catgegory: work on other issues or with other groups, in 6th place with 8 comments, are of a very similar nature.

Generally, these comments reflect a feeling that community groups are in competition for the time of the workers both with other groups and with other activities undertaken by the workers. In relation to work with colleagues, staff and team meetings are particularly

Table 10.4

Rank order of activities not thought to be valued by community groups by sample strata

| | C.W.A. | C.W. | S.C.W. | C.D.O. | All |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Written work records & reports | Work with other comm. dev. staff | Work with S.W. management | Admin & clerical work | Work with other comm. dev. staff |
| 2 | Work with comm. dev. staff | Written work records & reports | | Lack of availability | Admin and clerical work |
| 3 | Lack of availability | Training | | Corporate working | Written work records & reports |
| 4 | Admin & clerical work | Admin & clerical work | | Work with S.W. colleagues | Lack of availability |
| 5 | Training | Lack of availability | | Work with other groups or issues | Training |
| 6 | Informal discussions | Work with S.W. colleagues | | | Work with other groups or issues |
| 7 | Time not spent in the area | Work with S.W. management | | | Work with S.W. colleagues |
| 8 | Work with other groups or issues | Time not spent in the area | | | Work with S.W. management |
| | | Work with other groups or issues | | | Corporate working |
| | | Info. gathering and research | | | Time not spent in the area |

significant whilst in relation to lack of availability, comments such as these are typical: 'having to leave meetings early because needed elsewhere'; 'meeetings outside the area which mean I am not available or accessible to groups'.

Returning to the rank order as presented in Table 10.4, one of the other two categories in second place is: written work, recording and report production. Though a couple of the comments refer directly to the work required for this research, the category is more general than in relation to previous questions. The implication is that little purpose can be seen in this activity by the groups. Comments refer to such activities as: 'drafting a case study'; 'time spent reading and writing'; 'bi-monthly reports'.

The remaining category in second place is: administration and clerical work which has scored heavily in the negative aspect of each of the questions 5 to 8 from the final interview schedule.

Training activity scores in fifth place in the rank order with 10 comments, representing comments made by 18.5% of the sample. Comments relate to a variety of training activities including team evaluation days, a student supervision course and a course on home and community links.

The category: work on other issues or with other groups has already been noted as occupying sixth place in the rank order. It is followed by two categories: work with social work colleagues and; work with social work management. Here several comments imply a contest for the loyalty (if not the accountability) of workers between their employers and the consumers of their services. This contest may also underlie negative views believed to be held about work with community development

and social work colleagues. The following comment illustrates the difficulty: 'groups do not like the fact that I am a Regional employee and what this means in terms of freedom to support the group and express an opinion'. Another facet of the problems of working from a Social Work Department is illustrated by the comments: 'encouragement of clients to become involved in community groups causes dissention'.

Ninth place, as already noted, is occupied by the category: time not spent in the area. Its position is shared by the category: corporate working. This category, representing 6 comments and made by 11.1% of the sample, is further indication of a resentment which is believed to be held by groups about collaborative professional activity. Typical examples are: 'Issues groups set up in area initiative because they are new and not developed or understood': 'Meetings with officials from the other Departments': 'Work with the Area Development Team'.

Beyond this point in the rank order categories include four or less comments. They tend to reflect the broad patterns already identified.

The overall impression from the answers to this question is that workers believe the groups to feel negatively about their professional, collaborative and development activities which operate independently of the groups. Workers portray a rather self-centred view of the groups. How far this is a real picture of their attitudes is open to question but it suggests that workers have not established an understanding of the breadth of roles they are expected to perform or of the nature of their accountability and loyalties.

Comparison of the rank ordering of comment categories between sample strata in relation to activities not valued by community groups (Table 10.4) does not reveal substantial variation.

In relation to the rank ordering of non-valued activities by age, sex, work location and professional qualification (Table 10.5), though the pattern is generally consistent, a few variations are worthy of note. The ranking of the categories: lack of availability and, work with other groups and issues, in first place by women, relative to fourth and ninth for men, and the much higher ranking of: time not spent in the area, suggests that they experience groups as expressing more dependence on them. Whether this should be regarded as a characteristic of the way in which women see themselves, a reflection of the type of work they undertake, the way in which community groups relate to them or the way that they play their roles is open to question. The influence of the predominance of women in the Community Work Assistant group which is more oriented to community care and service activities may be part of the explanation. The result is also consistent with the frustration expressed by women about being expected to undertake 'odd obligements' for community groups (see Chapter 7).

That lack of availability is ranked as more significant by workers located in a social work office base is probably a reflection of the lack of physical accessibility to members of the community compared with their colleagues who are generally operating from premises shared with community organisations. This physical accessibility may also be an explanation for the relatively high ranking of the category: corporate working, by workers not located with other social work staff. Inter-departmental collaboration may be seen as drawing workers away from the local community and hence leading to conflicts of loyalty between the community and corporate local authority objectives.

Table 10.5 Relative rank orders of activities not thought to be valued by community groups by age, sex, work location and qualification

Rank Order

| Category | All | Location | | Age | | Qualification | | Sex | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | S.W. | Non S.W. | Younger | Older | CQSW | Non CQSW | Male | Female |
| Work with other Comm. Dev. staff | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 5 | 5 | 1 | 1 | 4 |
| Admin & clerical wk. | 2 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 7 |
| Written work records & reports | 2 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 7 | 3 | 4 |
| Lack of availability | 2 | 1 | 5 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 7 | 4 | 1 |
| Training | 5 | 1 | 7 | 2 | 5 | 5 | 2 | 5 | 1 |
| Work with other groups or issues | 6 | 7 | 5 | 8 | 1 | 2 | 9 | 9 | 1 |
| Work with S.W. colleagues | 7 | 7 | 7 | 6 | 8 | 8 | 5 | 7 | 7 |
| Work with S.W. management | 7 | 6 | 9 | 8 | 5 | 8 | 2 | 7 | 7 |
| Corporate working | 9 | - | 2 | 8 | 8 | - | 5 | 5 | - |
| Time not spent in the area | 9 | 8 | 7 | 6 | - | 5 | - | - | 4 |

CQSW qualified workers appear less concerned about the view that the community groups take of work with management but much more concerned than their colleagues about: written work, records and reports; lack of availability; work with other groups and issues and, time not spent in the area. It is important to note that the ranking of the last three of these categories is not a product of a predominance of women in the CQSW groups or indeed of comments from women from within the group. Explanations for the differences between the CQSW and non-CQSW qualified groups are not readily apparent. Similarly, why older workers should rank work with other groups and issues more highly and social work based workers: training, is not clear.

Comment

Elsewhere, in applying the community problem solving model developed by Spergel[1], I[2] have argued that community workers carry three basic functions in relating to community groups: organisational, inter-organisational and intra-organisational. The first is concerned with the process of creating organisational structure within a community by which it can undertake evaluation and diagnosis of its situation and hence prescribe for its own needs. The inter-organisational level is concerned with the relationship between organised communities and the institutions and agencies which control the means by which such groups can obtain redress of grievances. The intra-organisational level is concerned with the conflicts which are internal to a community and its representative organisations and inhibit its ability to develop a coherent organised resolution of its needs.

Using this formulation, it can be argued that in situations where there is currently no (or no effective) organised response to community problems, the primary task of the worker is to help the community to find mechanisms by which it can address its collective needs. Usually this involves drawing together a group of activists from the community of interest (itself commonly neighbourhood based), assisting it to clarify the nature of the problem and possible resolutions, identify tactics and strategy, and support the organisation in implementing these. This sounds quite straightforward but as the literature on the practice of community work consistently makes clear it is a highly complex process largely because disadvantaged people are likely to have very low expectations of the potential for change and need considerable support to achieve effectiveness. This is not a statement about innate abilities but a realistic recognition of the pressures experienced in daily life which, not only sap energy, but undermine belief in the potential for change. It is these factors which lead Twelvetrees,[3] for example, when discussing the time scales of community worker involvement to say:

> "But as far as deprived, poor or oppressed communities are concerned the process is very long indeed and the effect of community work intervention should be measured in terms of decades rather than years."

It is these same factors which not only affect time scale but also lead to stress on the intra-organisational processes of work with community groups. These processes concern the maintenance of group cohesion and direction, sustaining members through internal conflicts and frustrations in their relations with outsiders whose support they

require or whose attitudes or decisions need change. As I have suggested[4]:

> "In many respects it is the skill of the community worker in this role which is most important in determining the success of the community work process, yet it is the role that is least visible to outsiders."

Henderson and Thomas[5] stress the need for community workers to be supportive towards community groups. They say:

> "The group particularly needs the support and encouragement of the worker at times when its energies and enthusiasms are low, and it feels it has suffered setbacks, or achieved little, in reaching its goals. The worker can often be supportive in such times by maintaining the interest, optimism and commitment that seem to be waning in group members...."

This brief reminder of the character of the relationship between workers and groups in neighbourhood based community work in disadvantaged areas is provided because it illustrates issues likely to be prevolent for community workers in the sample. It may also help to explain some of their perceptions of the activities which groups with which they work value.

As Runciman[6] has argued there appears to be a correlation between the level of disadvantage which people experience and their belief in and horizons for change. Thus these workers, operating in multiply disadvantaged communities, may be accurately reflecting the aspirations of the groups with which they work when they stress concern with more immediate and parochial matters.

Just as significantly, however, it is argued that the difficulties outlined above, which are apparent to practitioners in supporting effective community group action, will tend to generate a high degree of identification of workers with the interests of the groups. Workers

whose actions may well have been catalytic in the promotion of an organised response from the community inevitably feel both a strong sense of responsibility for, and loyalty to, the process of community development. Butcher[7] et al in a detailed study of the functioning of five community groups comment:

> "The level of a community worker's involvement in a group is likely to be greater when he has been involved in establishing it, and when group members have easy access to his office or the immediate area of his activity."

This latter point is also significant for the sample studied here, particularly the Community Work Assistants and Community Workers who spend a very high proportion of their work time in direct contact with members of the community, particularly a relatively small number of active community group members.

It is not difficult in the light of these points to see why the tenor of comments in this chapter focusses on the meeting of locally defined needs and the adequate resourcing of community groups to achieve their ends. The evidence of Chapter 5, on the work that the sample actually undertakes, indicates that a high proportion of their activities do focus on the meeting of the kinds of needs which they believe community groups to have. This may not be entirely consistent with their own aspirations, as identified in Chapter 7, which suggests that the community groups, as consumers of the services of community work staff, exert a pivotal influence on what community workers actually do. Fortunately, this produces consistency with the expectations of the Director of Social Work when he states[8]:

> "The basic distinguishing feature of community work is that its primary focus within the process of community development is on assisting communities to organise around locally defined needs and issues" (his underlining).

If it were not consistent, it is suggested that the very negative attitudes to social work management expressed in Chapter 8, would be likely to precipitate a much higher degree of overt conflict than is actually apparent. There is then a congruence between the objectives of the social work department policy for community work and the way that community work staff understand the aspirations of the community groups with whom they work. The workers appear to accept a more limited set of objectives than is indicated by their own aspirations as discussed in Chapter 7, largely out of a loyalty to, or identification with, their consumers rather than out of acknowledgement of the appropriateness of the policy. I pointed out at the beginning of the chapter and as Butcher et al[9] put it:

> "Community workers are not autonomous in defining their role with community groups. The interplay between a community group, the employing agency and a worker's own attitudes determines the range and nature of the roles he performs."

In the case of this group of workers it appears that the potential for conflict between these interests is tempered by the critical influence of the community groups which appear to define the parameters of community work practice in a way which leaves little need for dispute about the kinds of activities with which workers become involved. Conflict may therefore often be as concerned with the postures that the various parties to the community work process adopt as it is with the realities of what workers do. The exception to this may be the relationship with local elected members in which, as suggested in

Chapter 9, a degree of role conflict appears to arise from the parallel functions of community workers and councillors.

Summary

Though over a quarter of the workers felt it was difficult to generalise about the aspirations of the community, over 80% made the comment that what community groups want to achieve is a resolution to the particular problems which have brought them into being. This may seem almost self-evident but it does indicate essentially self-interested and parochial concerns. In turn, this suggests that workers believe community groups to have more limited aspirations than the workers have for their own activities. 18.5% of the sample specifically mentioned that community groups hoped to obtain financial aid and other categories indicate that workers are expected to provide a channel by which resources can be directed to local communities. In only 4.4% of the comments made is there any suggestion that groups may want to look beyond local issues and think about their relationship to wider groups sharing similar social problems. These wider aspirations are suggested by 13.1% of the sample.

The general findings are consistent between sub groups in the sample.

The aspects of their work that the workers believe the community would most value reflect their view of community groups being parochial in orientation. Most popular categories are: resource work; advice and information work (the majority of comments specify that this is to groups not individuals); general work with community groups and provision of community premises facilities and amenities. All four of

the leading categories bear close relation to one another in their emphasis on supporting the process of community group activity.

Other quite commonly cited categories were: work with housing campaigns; IT, youth and children's work; media work; work with individuals and families and work to directly influence Regional and District Council Departments.

The general pattern holds across the sample as a whole though the more extensive interest in housing campaigns expressed by Community Workers and social work located staff is worthy of note.

Turning to those aspects of their work which workers felt community groups would least value, the general characteristic seems to be any activity which takes workers away from a direct relationship with the groups. Thus: work with other community development staff; lack of availability; time not spent in the area; work with other groups; written work, recording and report preparation; administration and clerical work and; training, are all commonly cited categories.

In relation to non-valued activities there is more variation, than elsewhere in the result, between sub groups of workers. The frustration expressed by women about activities which take them away from direct involvement in the activities of particular groups is especially noteworthy. CQSW qualified staff express the same concerns. The overall impression from this evidence is that workers believe the groups to feel negatively about their professional, collaborative and development activities which operate independently of the groups. Workers portray a rather self-centred view of the groups. It suggests that workers have not established an understanding of the breadth of roles they are expected to perform or of the nature of their

accountability and loyalties. However, at the current state of development of community work, the loyalty of workers to the community groups does not appear to be particularly problematic, for the aspirations of the groups, as indicated here, are consistent with social work department policy for community work and with the kinds of activity which community workers generally undertake.

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# PART V

## Values and Theory

# Chapter 11

## Factors influencing the practice of community work

### Introduction

In Chapters 5 and 6 we explored the nature of the work undertaken by community work staff in Strathclyde Region Social Work Department and in Chapters 7 to 10 their aspirations for, and evaluations of, their work as they see it themselves and as they understand the Councillors, their managers and the community groups to see it. This discussion has already indicated the complexity of the community work role and the wide range of influences which affect practice. From the evidence so far presented it would appear that the workers' values predispose them to responding to community needs but that they do not necessarily share the perceptions which the community groups have of their problems. Their own aspirations for their work suggest that the majority are prepared to act in a way which repsonds to community perceptions of need but that they hope that, in the process of so doing local people who become involved will themselves change and develop in directions which are congruent with the workers' hopes. The frustration expressed about the objectives of their managers, in particular, but also the Regional Council, suggests that, though inevitably influential, the workers are less inclined to respond to them than the community and their own aspirations.

In the final interviews with the workers a question was included to explicitly clarify which factors the workers felt were most influential in determining the character of the work they undertake. The responses to this question are of considerable interest for they confirm the

general introductory comments above, but suggest that the workers believe that their patterns of work are more subject to their own will than some of the earlier comment would suggest they might believe.

The question read: 'There are many factors which affect the character and style of community work. Please examine this list and place these factors in order of influence in relation to your work'. The list was: the resources of your agency; the nature of the problems in the area; your personal values and ideology; the attitudes of management; the attitudes of colleagues; the attitudes of politicians; your knowledge; your skills; your age; your sex; personal commitments, e.g. family; the attitudes and abilities of community members; your training; the professional values of community work.

Since it was recognised that it was not possible to provide a comprehensive list of potentially influential factors, respondents were also given opportunity, in the second part of the question, to identify other factors which they felt to be significant and rank their importance relative to those listed. The question read: 'Are there any other factors which you think may be of significance? If so, what are they and where would you place them in order of influence relative to those listed?'

Table 11.1 provides a rank ordering of the factors listed for all strata in the sample with comparative rankings for each strata alongside. The rankings were produced by scoring those in first place with one point, second place two points and so on, down to fourteenth place. The total scores were then added together, the lowest score ranking highest. Table 11.2 provides the comparative rank orders analysed on the basis of the variables of age (above or below the mean

Table 11.1 Rank Order to Factors Influencing Character & Style of Work (Scores in Brackets)

| Listed Factors | All | CW | CWA | CED | ACW |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| The nature of problems in area | 1 (162) | 3 ( 85) | 1 ( 52) | 2 ( 30) | 1 ( 7) |
| Attitudes & abilities of comm. members | 2 (191) | 1 ( 80) | 3 ( 74) | 3 ( 32) | 4 ( 15) |
| Personal values & ideology | 3 (218) | 2 ( 84) | 6 (102) | 1 ( 17) | 4 ( 15) |
| Your knowledge | 4 (219) | 4 (115) | 2 ( 66) | 5 ( 27) | 2 ( 11) |
| Your skills | 5 (239 | 4 (115) | 4 ( 83) | 6 ( 30) | 2 ( 11) |
| Attitudes of Management | 6 (360) | 9 (202) | 5 (101) | 6 ( 30) | 10 ( 27) |
| Resources of agency | 7 (377) | 10 (213) | 7 (115) | 8 ( 31) | 6 ( 18) |
| Attitudes of colleagues | 8 (383) | 8 (197) | 9 (129) | 4 ( 23) | 3 ( 23) |
| Attitudes of politicians | 9 (384) | 7 (198) | 8 (123) | 9 ( 33) | 11 ( 24) |
| Professional values of CW | 10 (425) | 12 (221) | 10 (131) | 11 ( 52) | 7 ( 22) |
| Your training | 11 (427) | 6 (180) | 12 (101) | 13 ( 61) | 9 ( 25) |
| Personal commitments e.g. family | 12 (480) | 11 (216) | 11 (157) | 10 ( 31) | 14 ( 34) |
| Your age | 13 (525) | 13 (250) | 13 (175) | 14 ( 64) | 13 ( 36) |
| Your sex | 14 (545) | 14 (266) | 14 (189) | 12 ( 59) | 12 ( 35) |

Table 11.2. Relative rank orders of factors influencing character and style of work by age, sex, work location and qualification

| | Rank Orders | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Work Location | | Age | | | | Qualification | |
| Category | All | SW | Non SW | Older | Younger | M | W | CQSW | Non-CQSW |
| Nature of problems in the area | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 |
| Attitudes & abilities of comm. members | 2 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 2 |
| Personal values & ideologies | 3 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 5 | 1 | 3 |
| Your Knowledge | 4 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 |
| Your Skills | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 3 | 5 | 5 |
| Attitudes of Management | 6 | 6 | 6 | 8 | 6 | 7 | 6 | 9 | 6 |
| Resources of Agency | 7 | 8 | 8 | 7 | 9 | 8 | 9 | 7 | 8 |
| Attitudes of Colleagues | 8 | 9 | 7 | 9 | 8 | 9 | 7 | 11 | 7 |
| Attitudes of Politicians | 9 | 7 | 9 | 11 | 7 | 10 | 8 | 8 | 9 |
| Prof. values of C.W. | 10 | 10 | 11 | 10 | 10 | 6 | 14 | 6 | 10 |
| Your Training | 11 | 11 | 10 | 6 | 11 | 11 | 10 | 12 | 11 |
| Personal Commitments e.g. Family | 12 | 12 | 12 | 12 | 12 | 12 | 11 | 10 | 13 |
| Your age | 13 | 13 | 13 | 13 | 14 | 13 | 13 | 13 | 12 |
| Your sex | 14 | 14 | 14 | 14 | 13 | 14 | 12 | 14 | 14 |

of 32 years), sex, work location (those based with other social work staff and those not so located) and professional qualification (those holding the Certificate of Qualification in Social Work compared with those with other forms of professional qualification - predominantly Youth and Community or Community Education Diplomas).

In focussing on the 'character' and 'style' of community work, the question was seeking to explore the factors which influence the ways in which the workers perform their roles. It focussed on how they believe that they do their job rather than on an abstract assessment of factors which might generally influence community workers or on a measure of what workers believe produces successful or unsuccessful outcome to practice. The question, then, has elicited information which relates to the factors which each worker feels are most significant for the way that they undertake their own practice.

The ranking of influential factors

As the Table 11.1 shows, the factors most commonly felt to be of significance was the nature of the problems in the area. This result emphasises the degree to which workers believe the process of community work to necessarily develop out of the experience of people in the locality. When considered alongside the factor ranking second, the attitudes and abilities of community members, the results suggest not only that work is most influenced by the nature of the problems in the area but also by the perceptions and responses of the community members to those problems. It is noticeable that both the two top ranked factors score in the first four even when analysed by sample strata. The factor in third place, however, demonstrates more variation between

the strata. Particularly the Community Development Organisers and Community Workers place greater stress on the influence of personal values and ideology than the Community Work Assistants who only rank this factor in sixth place. It can be argued that there may be tension between the first two ranked factors and the third ranked factor in that the former imply responsiveness to the circumstances pertaining in the area, whilst the latter implies judgement of appropriate forms of activity based on the particular value dispositions and ideological frameworks which the worker may hold. That the same strata of the sample rank both types of factor highly suggests that the actual work undertaken will be determined in the interactions between the worker and the community. Indeed the way in which the nature of the problems in the area is defined is likely to reflect the differing perspectives of worker and community. The lowest ranking of value and ideological factors by Community Work Assistants suggests a greater willingness to be responsive to the community's own perceptions of its needs. It may also be related to training and academic qualification (see Chapter 4).

In fourth place in the overall rank order comes the factor: your knowledge. This factor is ranked more highly by the Community Work Assistants and Senior Community Workers than the other two groups. In the case of the former, it is interesting to speculate in the light of the low ranking of the influence of training (placed in 12th position by the Community Work Assistants) whether there is a connection between the two factors. In other words does the absence of training lead to a belief in limitations of knowledge base which circumscribe the scope of work undertaken.

In fifth place the sample ranked their skills. Again there continues to be a fairly consistent ranking. Indeed the total scores for the factors demonstrate a substantial gap between factors ranked 5 and above and those below this position. In the first 5 factors there is a remarkably consistent overall pattern in that only 2 factors are ranked outside the top 5 places, the Community Work Assistants ranking, personal values and ideology, in 6th position and the Community Development Organisers, skills, in the same position. Neither represents a contradiction of the general pattern.

Exploring the findings in relation to the variables: age, sex, work location and professional qualification, Table 11.2 illustrates the same general consistency in the ranking of the top five factors. No sub group ranks any of the factors outside the top five. The nature of the problems in the area is again shown to be the most significantly rated factor by most workers. Within the ranking of the top five categories the most significant variations occur in relation to: your personal values and ideology. Men rank this in first place compared with fifth for women. This result is no doubt influenced by the higher proportion of women in the Community Work Assistant group, which, as noted earlier, gives less prominence to this factor. Nonetheless it is interesting to speculate as to whether men feel a greater need to see their work as an expression of their own values and ideology. Could it be an expression of a kind of intellectual male machismo which might suggest a tendency to more directive forms of intervention? When compared with the tentative proposition, suggested in Chapter 9, that male workers appear to have a greater expectation that they should be involved in more politically delicate organisational activities, the result is of

interest. It is worth noting too that CQSW holders rate values and ideology more highly than workers with other professional qualifications, who place it in third as against first place.

Before moving on from this group of factors it is also worth noting that women rate their skills as a more important factor than their male colleagues. Character of role playing may be seen as having more to do with the availability of techniques for promoting change than with the ideology of the worker. It has to be remembered, however, that any such differences are relatively minor variations in a highly consistent overall pattern.

Just as the first five factors are relatively closely grouped in terms of scores, so too are the next four factors. The first five are of two main types, they concern the nature and people of the community in which the worker operates and personal characteristics of the worker. The following four tend to emphasise the nature of the organisational environment within which the worker operates. They concern the attitudes of management, the resources of the agency, the attitudes of colleagues and the attitudes of politicians. They are ranked in that order.

The closeness of the scores for these factors suggest they are really given similar levels of significance. Clearly their middle order ranking does not place them at a level of insignificance but suggests that the organisational milieu for the practice of community work is seen as less significant than the personal and community context. Particularly the rankings of the attitudes of management and politicians offer some interesting opportunities for speculation about the impact of formal local authority policy on the practice of community work. The

implication is that workers must take account of these influences but that in practice policy is less significant in determining what actually happens than the interactions between the community context and the personal characteristics and dispositions of individual workers. Such a hypothesis is supported by the differences already identified in the earlier parts of this commentary between the aspirations of the workers and the way that they understand the hopes of the sponsors and managers of their activity.

It is also interesting to note that the collateral influence of colleagues is rated alongside the influences of management and politicians. Thus while workers take account of their colleagues this does not suggest a high degree of collaborative working and does not support the suggestion, sometimes made, that there is a conspiratorial relationship between workers relative to their managers and political sponsors. If this were so, it is believed, that the rank ordering would place less emphasis on individual factors and show less regard for the nature of the community context. It may be felt that this view should be tempered by evidence, from Chapter 6, of the large amounts of time spent with other community work colleagues.

Exploring these four factors in relation to the different strata of the sample and the variables of age, sex, professional qualification and work location some interesting differences of ranking occur. In particular, Community Development Organisers rank the attitudes of their colleagues much more highly than the other groups. It is suggested that this is a reflection of the importance of such relationships for the effective fulfilment of the managerial functions of the Community Development Organiser group. Community Work Assistants and to a lesser

extent Community Development Organisers rank the attitudes of management more highly than their colleagues. In the case of the former this may well be a reflection of their lowly status and lack of qualification which may reduce claims to, or operation on the basis of, professional independence. This suggestion is supported by comparison with the figures for qualified workers, both groups of whom rate the attitudes of management as less significant than the unqualified Community Work Assistants. The higher ranking of the attitudes of management by Community Development Organisers no doubt reflects their key position in line management between community work staff and the Social Work Department more generally. As was noted in Chapter 8, they are particularly negative about the way that the senior managers of the Social Work Department see community work; the combination of this frustration with direct line management accountability to them may provide the explanation for the relatively higher ranking.

Another significant variation occurs between CQSW and non-CQSW qualified staff in relation to the factor: attitudes of colleagues, the former rating it at place eleven but the latter place six. The writer can offer no readily apparent explanation for this difference. A similar difference is found between older and younger workers in relation to the factor: the attitudes of politicians. The higher ranking by the younger group may indicate less confidence in working with politicians. It may also be related to the finding of Chapter 9 that older workers have a clearer expectation that their role will be seen by councillors to involve work to bring community, elected members and officials together. This may indicate that they expect less conflict with the interests of councillors.

Though there are some significant variations in the four middle ranked factors, the most impressive feature of the results is the general homogeneity of opinion between sub-groups of the sample.

By place 10 in the rank order it is suggested that the scores justify a view that these are factors not regarded as of major significance. Their low status is, however, as worthy of comment as the higher ranking of other factors.

In place 10 comes the professional values of community work. The inclusion of this factor in the list is partly to see whether the workers recognised, or believed in, the existence of a collective value set for community workers as an occupational grouping. The responses suggest that they do not or, if they do, that they do not believe this value set to be of major significance. Though the questionnaire did not give formal opportunities to do so, it is worth noting that a few workers commented in relation to this factor that they did not believe community work to be a profession. One suggested that it was: 'an extension of the working class movement and hence antithetical to professionalism'.

The place of the professional values of community work produced some very interesting variations between sub groups of the sample. Most notably, men and CQSW holders rated this factor much more highly than their colleagues giving it sixth place, compared with with fourteenth and tenth respectively. What is most interesting is that this corresponds very closely to the results in relation to the factor: your personal values and ideology which was also rated much more highly by these two groups. Clearly value factors, whether they be personal or some notion of a collective value set for community work, are given much

more significance by these two groups, especially men. As suggested earlier, this may reflect gender differences in self perception and motivation and may also reflect differences in the orientation of social work as against other forms of training for community work. Senior Community Workers also rate this factor more highly than their colleagues.

The ranking of the workers' training in place 11 is a salutory comment for community work trainers, though they may take some heart from the inconsistency of the ranking of this factor between the strata. Not surprisingly the Community Work Assistants rank this factor low in their priority list, it is suggested, simply because they have not had formal community work training other than short, in-service, courses. Community Workers on the other hand place their training in sixth place which suggests that they acknowledge a significant level of influence on their practice from this factor. Whether it is the relatively recent experience of training (see evidence from Chapter 4) or the relevance of the training to their activities which leads them to rank training significantly more highly than their more senior colleagues is an interesting question. It is suggested, however, that the low ranking by Community Development Organisers, particularly, may reflect the lack of connection between the content of basic training courses and the tasks and roles that they now perform. Similarly it might be suggested that training is likely to be given more significance in the first few years of practice, but the significantly higher rating of training by older workers may contradict this proposition. Given that, as was shown in Chapter 4, age correlates poorly with length of experience, the finding may indicate that workers who were older when they trained found more

value in it than their younger colleagues. Trainers may wish to ponder this point, though it may have less to do with the quality of the training on offer than to do with the effort to attain a qualification, which is often much greater for mature students who have either had to compensate for lack of school leaving qualifications or entered training after a long absence from formal education.

Before moving on from the question of training it is worth noting that there is only a marginally different rating of its significance between CQSW and non-CQSW trained workers.

In twelfth place comes the factor: personal commitments. Results here are remarkably consistent between all sub-groups in the sample.

The last two places are occupied by the personal factors: your age and your sex. The low ranking of these factors is felt to be rather surprising. As has been noted at a wide variety of points in this study both of these factors do appear to influence the nature and perception of practice held by the workers, but they do not appear to recognise this. In particular, the increasing interest in sexism in the literature of community work, as noted in Chapter 1, does not seem to be extensively reflected not only by this finding, but, equally by the limited practice focus on women's issues (see Chapter 6). Women do rate their sex as a slightly more significant factor than their male colleagues but rating it at place twelve as against fourteen is only a marginal difference, suggesting that feminist ideology is not a major influence on community work in Strathclyde Social Work Department.

Before moving on to the other factors which workers identified as being of influence, it is worth noting that differences in work location, that is, whether workers operate from a base alongside other

social work staff or not, appears to have virtually no bearing on the significance that workers attach to these fourteen factors.

Other factors which the workers considered important

Apart from the factors listed, respondents were given opportunity to offer factors which they would identify as having influence on the character and style of work undertaken and rank them relative to those offered by the interviewers. These factors are listed in Table 11.3. In all 45 additional factors were suggested, however, many of these were minor variations on those offered by the interviewers. It seems pertinent to comment here only on those occurring with some frequency and a figure of four separate comments in a category has been adopted as the cut-off point. Other comments can be scrutinised in Table 11.3. The largest category contains only six additional comments which have been grouped under the heading: attitudes/resources of other local authority departments. This factor was probably a significant omission from the list which was provided and, given a mean average ranking of fifth place by respondents making the comment, suggests that the broader local government context of practice may be seen as significant. Receiving five comments is the factor: appreciation of the culture and history of the area. On average those making this comment place its significance between points 3 and 4 in the rank order. In some ways it can be seen as an extension of the factor: the nature of the problems in the area, but it goes further in suggesting that historical and cultural contexts of those problems bear strong influence on how work is undertaken.

Table 11.3 Final Questionnaire Q.9 Additional Factors Suggested

| | Factor | No. of respondents Listing |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | Structure/position of CD in SW Department | 1 |
| 2. | Co-operation & co-ordination of policy between Depts. | 2 |
| 3. | Support from team/lack of support from team | 4 |
| 4. | Quality of supervision | 1 |
| 5. | Lack of support/backing from Department | 1 |
| 6. | Urban aid funding | 1 |
| 7. | Being based in Local Government | 1 |
| 8. | Being in an initiative area | 3 |
| 9. | Physical structure/appearance | 1 |
| 10. | Relationships with people in community | 3 |
| 11. | Personal commitment/enthusiasm/stamina to work | 2 |
| 12. | Lack of management/structure/nature of management | 4 |
| 13. | Lack of resources | 1 |
| 14. | Attitudes/resources of other LA Dept. | 6 |
| 15. | Personality, patience, humour, resistance | 4 |
| 16. | Agency objectives | 1 |
| 17. | Local history of community organisation in area | 2 |
| 18. | Appreciation of history/culture of area | 5 |
| 19. | Learning from mistakes | 1 |
| 20. | Absence of base in area | 1 |
| 21. | Isolation of area | 1 |
| 22. | Economic factors in area caused by Central Government | 1 |
| 23. | Abilities of colleagues | 3 |
| 24. | Abilities of management | 2 |
| 25. | Ability of local politicians | 1 |
| 26. | Process through which problems are identified | 1 |
| 27. | My political views | 1 |
| 28. | Political values of politicians | 1 |
| 29. | Political values of community members | 1 |
| 30. | Availability of finance | 1 |
| 31. | Political climate/Government in office | 4 |
| 32. | Needs of sponsoring agency | 1 |
| 33. | Unemployment level | 1 |
| 34. | The area you work in/environment surrounding the place | 2 |
| 35. | The community activists | 1 |
| 36. | The resources/facilities of the area | 2 |
| 37. | The resource policy of the employer | 1 |
| 38. | Length of time in post | 1 |
| 39. | Attitudes of section heads in social work | 1 |
| 40. | Salaries & conditions of service | 1 |
| 41. | Training with community & other agencies | 1 |
| 42. | Personal background | 2 |
| 43. | Fact that respondent is a District Councillor | 1 |
| 44. | Attitudes of family & friends to your job | 1 |

Ranking between places 5 and 6 comes the factor: support from team/lack of support from team. This factor is noted by four respondents and may be seen as an extension of the factor: attitudes of colleagues, overall ranked in eighth place.

Comments on the influence of management and its structure or nature are also made by four respondents. This may be seen as an elaboration of the factor overall ranked in sixth place.

Four workers also comment on the influence of personality factors such as patience, humour and resilience. All of these workers would regard this as the most significant influential factor in relation to the style and character of their work.

The final factor with four comments is: the nature of the general political climate particularly as influenced by the government of the day. As with previous comments this is ranked quite highly between places two and three which may suggest that both factors could usefully have been included in the formal list to which the workers had to respond.

Overall these findings serve to confirm the general propositions set out at the beginning of the chapter. Many of the issues raised are discussed further in the final chapters.

Summmary

Respondents were asked to rank order fourteen factors which might influence the character and style of their work.

Substantially the most significant factors were considered to be the nature of the problems in the area and attitudes and abilities that community members bring to responses to those problems. These were

fairly closely followed by: your personal values and ideology. It can be argued that there may be some tension between the first two categories and the third for the former imply responsiveness to the circumstances pertaining in the area, whilst the latter implies judgement of appropriate forms of activity based on the particular value dispositions and ideological frameworks which the worker may hold. The nature of work undertaken may, therefore, reflect a negotiation of interests between the community and the worker. It is notable that Community Work Assistants place less significance on values and ideology of the worker. This group rated the workers' knowledge much more highly. This may reflect their lack of training. Senior Community Workers rank both knowledge and skills in equal second place.

Men and CQSW qualified workers place more significance on their personal values and ideology than their colleagues. Women rate their skill as more influential on the character of their practice than other groups of workers.

The first five factors in the list appear to cluster as a distinct group of characteristics which are held to be important. They relate to the characteristics of the area and the worker.

The next four factors: attitudes of management; resources of agency; attitudes of colleagues; and attitudes of politicians, also seem to cluster. They emphasise the nature of the organisational environment in which the worker operates. Their middle order ranking suggests that central policy formulation and resource allocation may be less significant than local community and personal worker characteristics in determining what work is done and how.

Community Development Organisers and non-CQSW qualified staff rank the attitudes of their colleagues more highly than the other groups and along with Community Work Assistants also rate the attitudes of management as more significant. Younger workers rank the attitudes of politicians as more significant than older workers.

The low ranking of training is a salutory thought for community work trainers, though those more recently in training appear to value it more highly, as do older workers.

The interest of community workers nationally in sexism as an issue makes the ranking of: your sex, in last place an interesting contradiction. Women appear only marginally more influenced by this factor.

Workers were invited to identify additional factors that they felt might be of importance. Ones which featured prominantly were: attitudes and resources of other local authority departments; appreciation of the culture and history of the area; support/lack of support from team, and the political climate of the day.

# Chapter 12

## The Workers and Practice Theory Models for Community Work

The conceptualisation of community work practice has often been undertaken by the establishment of models of practice which attempt to identify patterns of relationship between methods, targets, theories and values which assist workers in locating particular styles of practice relative to others. Such models should not be seen as blueprints into which all practice can neatly be fitted. To do this would be to distort reality, for, as the material in this study has illustrated, community work is an interactive process where choices of approach are bound, to a degree, to reflect the characteristics of the environment in which change is being promoted. In addition workers may be inconsistent and the character of their activities is liable to change over time. However, it is of interest to know with what models of practice this group of workers associates itself and thus to be able to consider whether the adoption of particular labels for their practice style is generally consistent with the work that is undertaken. Such an exploration only has validity, however, if the workers can be shown to share a common perception of the characteristics of the models with which they associate themselves. The final two questions of the final interview sought to establish both the models with which workers identified and the characteristics which they associated with them.

Question 10 asked respondents to identify the label which most readily described the character and style of their work. In order to illicit an immediate response a 'flash card' technique was used. The

interviewer held up a postcard with labels which might be used to describe different styles of community work. Respondents were only given time to read the list and were asked to give an immediate response. In this way it was hoped that the possibility of calculating the 'safest' answer, or that thought to be most desirable by the researcher, could be eliminated. The answers therefore reflect the immediate reactions of respondents to the list provided and not a considered, premeditated response. The list included all the main labels understood by the researcher to be in common usage within community work and was as follows: Adult Education, Community Care, Community Action, Social Planning, Community Development, Neighbourhood Work and Community Organisation. The term community work itself was not included as this was taken to be a generic term not usually indicative of a particular orientation to practice.

Only if a respondent refused to identify a label was he given the opportunity to identify an alternative to those listed. Only two people did not identify a label on the list, one of these identified community work as the most appropriate description for her activity whilst the other was not prepared to answer the question. Two people insisted on identifying more than one label to describe their work. The very low non response rates suggests that the labels listed are those in common usage at least amongst this sample of Community Workers.

Before moving to an exploration of the results, it is important to comment on the limitation imposed upon the workers by asking them to identify only one label. Readers may argue that in practice community work often demonstrates an eclecticism which results in workers adopting approaches which draw on different models of practice as a reflection of

different conditions pertaining at different times. I would accept this, but argue that workers tend to be drawn to styles of practice which reflect their values and which are feasible within their particular practice context. Thus, though over time they may operate in more than one model, the overall pattern of their practice is likely to be characterised by an affinity with an 'ideal' model reflecting their theoretical perspective and employment context. The point of the question, therefore, was to try to establish the styles of community work with which these workers primarily identify. The opportunity to identify the characteristics which they associate with the label of their choice provides a means of discovering whether there are groups of workers who use these labels in a way which is indicative of a common cluster of values, methods and objectives for their work.

As an exploration of the findings reveals, though there may be identifiable clusters within the sample around particular labels, this does not suggest that some characteristics of one model are not also to be found in others. For example, there is an element in all the descriptions given by the workers of different models which associates them with a process of education. Similarly, all include problem solving objectives. The clusters overlap with one another but it is apparent that the core ideas and purposes of each are distinguishable in the minds of the respondents.

The precise list of labels offered to the respondent reflects the views of the researcher of those which were in common usage in community work in Strathclyde. Others might suggest variations on this list. Thomas', for example, says:

> "Our experience in the last two decades indicates that community work's distributive and development functions

> have been part of five principle approaches. These are: community action; community development; social planning; community organisation; service extension".

From this list the term service extension is in some ways analogous to the term community care in the list offered to respondents, though it is more concerned with direct service provision by welfare agencies in the community than with self-help service provision. The latter is subsumed under the heading community development. Though the Thomas list does not include the term: neighbourhood work, it is worth noting that he has been centrally responsible for the adoption of this description through his practice theory writing.[2] Jones[3] has provided a similar set of labels; he offers: community organisation, community development, community work, service development and social planning. Neither of these lists explicitly identify adult education but it was felt that in the Scottish context the influence of community education activities deserved acknowledgement by providing workers with an opportunity to indicate whether they identified the adult education process as the central component of their activities. The Alexander[4] report which included the statement: 'the educational character of community development is readily recognised', was after all entitled: 'Adult education: the challenge of change'.

Practice theory models with which workers identify

The results of the question are presented in Table 12.1 and show both the overall pattern and pattern by sample strata. 39% of the sample selected community development as the most appropriate label which ranked in first place for Community Development Organisers, Senior

Table 12.1

Practice theory models with which workers identify by sample strata

| | C.W. | C.D.O. | S.C.W. | C.W.A. | All |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Adult Education | 1 | | | | 1 |
| Community Care | | 1 | | 4 | 5 |
| Community Action | 8 | | 1 | 2 | 11 |
| Social planning | | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 |
| Community Development | 14 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 20 |
| Neighbourhood Work | 2 | - | - | 5 | 7 |
| Community Organisation | | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 |
| Other | | | | 1 | 1 |
| Combinations | 1 | 1 | | | 2 |
| N.A. | 1 | | | | 1 |
| Total | 29 | 6 | 5 | 16 | 54 |

Community Workers and Community Workers. Indeed almost 50% of the last group identified with this label.

The second most popular category was community action, representing 20% of the responses. This category was far more popular amongst Community Workers than the other strata.

In third place is the category: neighbourhood work. This represents 13% of the sample but is largely a reflection of the views of Community Work Assistants. The dominant influence of this group is also apparent in the category community care which comes in fourth place with 9% of the responses. Combined, these two categories demonstrate a distinct difference between the labels which Community Work Assistants use to define themselves and those used by other categories of worker. The remaining labels, community organisation, adult education and social planning attract few responses.

Just as there are significant variations in response between different strata of the sample in terms of job designation, so too there are interesting patterns associated with the variables of sex, age, professional qualification and work location. As in previous chapters, in relation to age, the sample has been divided at the mean age of 32 years, in relation to qualification, between social work and non-social work qualified staff and in relation to location, between those sharing their primary office base with other social work staff and those not doing so. The results are set out in Table 12.2 as percentages of each sub group identifying with a particular label.

In relation to the most popular category overall: community development, two aspects are of particular note. Firstly, this is a less popular category for women and secondly, for workers not located

Table 12.2

Practice Theory models with which workers identify by four variables: sex, age, professional qualification and work location

| | Sex | | Age | | Professional Qualification | | Location | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Male | Female | Older | Younger | CWSQ | Non CQSW | S.W. Base | Non S.W. Base |
| Adult Education | 3% | - | - | 3% | - | 4% | - | 6% |
| Community Care | 6% | 21% | 18% | 7% | - | 4% | 17% | - |
| Community Action | 21% | 21% | 9% | 30% | 33% | 22% | 20% | 24% |
| Social Planning | 6% | 5% | 14% | - | 11% | 4% | 6% | 6% |
| Community Development | 48% | 26% | 41% | 40% | 44% | 52% | 49% | 24% |
| Neighbourhood Work | 6% | 26% | 9% | 17% | 11% | 4% | 6% | 29% |
| Community Organisation | 9% | - | 9% | 3% | - | 9% | 3% | 12% |

with other social work staff. Women score more highly in relation to community care and neighbourhood work. This reflects the pattern for Community Work Assistants who are more likely to be female and to be located in community premises rather than with other social work staff. The greater attachment of workers not located with other social work staff, to neighbourhood work is also a reflection of the fact that many of these workers are operating from community premises which function as neighbourhood centres.

That more older than younger workers identify with the label community care may also reflect the slightly higher average age of Community Work Assistants. In relation to age, however, the most interesting feature is the higher attachment of younger workers to community action models. This correlates with the Community Worker Group which accounted for most of the workers identifying with this label and which is also slightly younger on average. In relation to other variables, however, there is a generally fairly consistent level of identification with community action.

Returning to the label community care, it is worthy of note that all the workers identifying with this were located alongside other social work staff. Though they are still only a small proportion of the workers operating from this setting, the significance of common location is worthy of note.

Taking these findings in relation to those on job designation, profiles of typical workers associating with the most popular labels can be suggested. The community care worker will be of low professional status (probably unqualified), female, in the older age category and located alongside other social work staff. The community action

oriented worker will be a basic grade qualified member of staff, in the younger age group, male or female. Neighbourhood workers will tend to be of low professional status probably unqualified, younger, female and located away from other social work staff. The community development oriented worker will tend to be a qualified member of staff, is more likely to be male and to work from a base alongside other social work staff.

The broad pattern of these results suggests that the workers identify broadly with the tripartite models of community work commonly identified in community work literature. These have been heavily influenced by American writers particularly Rothman,[5] Brager and Specht[6] and Spergel[7] but have been adapted using more common British terminology by writers such as Butcher[8] et al. The labels adopted here correspond to ones I[9] have used elsewhere and produce a classification under the headings: community care/neighbourhood work, community development and community action, which accounts for 80% of the preferences of the sample.

Characteristics associated with different practice-theory models

Though it is apparent that certain labels are more popular than others and that this varies significantly between the sample strata, the real interest of the responses is only revealed by examination of the characteristics that workers attach to the label of their choice. This was the focus of the final question 11. It was designed to explore the way in which respondents understood the label which they had chosen to describe their work to be generally used. This enables, firstly, consideration of the consistency with which the members of the sample

choosing a particular label use it, secondly, exploration of the meaning to be attached to particular labels and thirdly, comparison of the descriptions given and the actual nature of the work undertaken during the recorded months.

The analysis adopted a similar approach to that used for Chapters 7 to 10. The sample was divided into groups by chosen label, the characterstic identified as belonging to that label were examined and grouped into categories, the frequency of responses in each category was assessed and a rank order of the characteristics produced. For the purposes of this analysis the two respondents giving composite answers have had their comments recorded and assessed for each of the labels with which they identify. Each group identifying with a particular label has had its comments quantified and rank ordered. The following commentary is based on this procedure.

(a) Community Development

Taking the label community development first, as the most popular category, the researcher interpretes the comments as representing a generally consistent pattern which closely reflects the ways in which the label is most commonly used in community work literature. Indeed the distinctions between the comments made are often rather subtle. The most popular characteristic identified was that community development was concerned with promoting confidence amongst community members to become agents of change for the community, without being dependent on the worker in the long run. Examples of comments are: 'Community development concerns greater community capability and confidence to promote change'; 'is concerned to develop local activities so the

community worker becomes superfluous'; 'is designed to help the community recognise its own power - the community worker is not the leader'.

The two categories of characteristic in second place in the rank order are really variations of this theme. One identified community development as an educative process which is concerned with general understanding of the nature of political and social processes that affect the lives of people in the community, whilst the other offers a more task oriented focus which sees community development as a means of promoting self help by the community in its own terms. Comments in the former include: 'Community development is an educative process through stages of development'; 'community development is concerned with developing understanding of political and social process'. Typical of the latter is: 'Community development is a process where the community are helped to approach and tackle the problems they have identified in the ways that they feel would be adequate'.

The characteristics identified in the first three comment categories stress educative roles and the essentially subservient relationship of the worker to the interests of the community. One of the two categories in fourth place is a further variant on these themes, stressing the role of community development: 'in supporting individual growth and development of disadvantaged individuals'. Combined, these categories represent just over 45% of the total comments made. The numbers of the sample chosing to identify with the community development model making comments in the respective categories are: 10, 6, 6 and 5 respectively.

In equal fourth place in the rank order is the comment that community development is a generic label involving elements of a number

of models and styles of approach in community work. These comments imply a less distinctive nature to this approach to community work.

Returning to the more familiar tenor of responses, the sixth ranked category representing comments by four members of the sample returns to an emphasis on the centrality of the community members in the community development process. Here the label is seen as associated with styles of work which emphasise participation of the community in its own affairs. This implies self direction by the community based on popular involvement in both discussion and action. Ilustrative comments are: 'Community development concerns full and open participation by the community'; 'it is a process where as many members of the community are involved as wish to be'.

Many of the remaining comments continue to reflect the most common strands of presentation though a few seem to belong with those associated with other labels.

It has already been suggested that the characteristics which the workers associate with the term community development are consistent with its use in community work literature. This can be demonstrated by reference to some examples, though comparison of these will illustrate the degree to which the boundaries are blurred. One of the most longstanding and often quoted is that of the United Nations (1959)[10] which states that:

> "The term 'community development' has come into international usage to connote the process by which the efforts of the people themselves are united with those of governmental authorities to improve the economic, social and cultural conditions of communities, to integrate these communities into the life of the nation and to enable them to contribute fully to national progress. The complex process is thus made up of two essential elements: the participation of the people themselves in efforts to improve their level of living with as much reliance as possible on their own initiative and the provision of

> technical and other services in ways which encourage initiative, self help and mutual help and make them more effective."

This definition is a product of its historical origins in that it reflects immediate post war community development approaches in the third world. Workers in this sample do not associate the term with nation building or even explicitly with the fulfilment of the Regional Council's policy objectives on community work (though the latter would be consistent with a community development approach). However, the emphasis on participation, initiative and self help by communities is directly echoed in the comments of this sample. Perhaps closer to the views expressed by the workers here is the definition offered by the American writers Kramer and Specht[11] who say community development is concerned with:

> "efforts to mobilise the people who are affected by a community condition...into groups and organisations to enable them to take action on these social problems and issues which affect them."

Here there is a direct reference to the idea that workers carry enabling roles. This is a commonly held view in the sample.

Turning to a definition of community development drawn from the British literature the consistency with the tenor of workers' comments seems even more clear. Thomas[12] says:

> "The community development strategy emphasises self help, mutual support, the building up of neighbourhood integration, the development of neighbourhood capacities for problem solving and self-representation, and the promotion of collective action to bring a community's preferences to the attention of political decision makers."

(b) Community Action

By contrast with the values of self determination, and self selected educational development, apparent under the heading community development, the characteristics associated with the term community action reveal a much harder, more aggressive, stance. As much as anything, the change is in the style of language which is used to describe the activity. Terms tend to be harsher reflecting more conflictual and polarised stances about the nature of the problems the community faces and the kinds of approaches it can adopt in relation to its problems. Again this is generally consistent with the ways in which the term is used in community work literature.

The most popularly identified characteristic of work under this label is its role in political education. The worker is seen as supporting the community to develop a political awareness of the nature and causes of their own local problems and the inter-connectedness between these experiences and those of wider groups in society. This emphasis on political analysis at both micro and macro levels indicates a general proclivity towards structural explanations of community needs in disadvantaged areas. In all 17.5% of the comments are in this category. Examples are: 'Community action involves helping local people to gain knowledge and political awareness both at local and national level'; 'focuses on political education'; 'concerns politicising people'; 'concerns helping people to recognise that their aims should be much wider than simply local issues and helps groups to recognise they do not take action in isolation'.

In second place in the rank order come comments which associate community action with 'issue based work' and 'campaigning activity' by the community around these issues. The use of the term 'issue', implies a conflict of values or interest between the community and resource holders and the term 'campaign', a need for concerted, aggressive promotion of community interests. This category represents six comments, or 15% of the total.

The third most popular category with five comments, emphasises that the purpose of the activity is for the community to exert control over its own affairs and to develop self confidence in the use of power and organisational ability. The difference between this emphasis and that under the community development label is one of degree rather than direction. Here the language is of control and power struggle, whereas in the former, it was of participation, and, by implication, negotiated solutions to problems. Comments here include: 'Community action concerns the raising of community members' ability to take control'/'increase confidence'/'pass on organisational skill'/'use power'.

This emphasis continues to be reflected in the fourth most popular category which focusses on the promotion of community challenge, specifying the likely use of direct action tactics. A further comment suggests that workers should recognise that this kind of approach may bring them into conflict with their managers. Others specifically identify a structural analysis and an ideological framework based on conflict models of society. For example: 'Community action involves the advancement of community challenge on an overtly political basis, if necessary involving direct action'; 'Community action involves back-up

to groups even if it is against what your managers are saying'; 'Community action is based on a structural analysis of peoples' problems'/'an ideological framework for the work based in conflict models'.

The remaining comment categories represent just one comment but few offer any variation on the dominant themes already identified. Thus the language is of conflict and confrontation, polarised perceptions of needs and their resolution, of 'challenging the opposition' and 'organising a political response to disadvantage'.

Comparing these perceptions of community action with text book definitions, the consistency is immediately apparent. Thomas'[13] says of community action:

> "This focuses on the organisation of those adversely affected both by decisions, or non-decisions, of public and private bodies and by more general structural characteristics of society. The strategy aims to promote collective action to challenge established socio-political and economic structures and processes, to explore and explain the power realities of people's situations and, through this twin pronged approach, to develop both critical perspectives of the status quo and alternative bases of power and action."

A parallel definition from American literature is that offered by Perlman and Gurin'[14] as a summary of Rothman's description of what he calls social, rather than community action. It reads:

> "The goal is change in power relationships and resources. The clientelle are disadvantaged segments of the community and the practice is one of helping them to become organised, to crystallise action issues, and to engage in conflict oriented action against the power structure."

(c) Neighbourhood Work

As noted, the third most popular label was neighbourhood work, a category dominated by responses from the Community Work Assistants group. The primary distinguishing element appears to be the location of the worker in an area at 'grass root' level where he is 'readily available' to, and has a capacity to build up a 'detailed local knowledge' of, the community. Neighbourhood work is a label which indicates a relatively eclectic stance in terms of methods. Indeed the second most popular category stresses the use of roles adopted from a wide range of models, from community care to community action, but adapted to the particular needs of local groups. Neighbourhood workers appear to see themselves as serving the interests of community groups across a wide range of potential interests and approaches to resolving problems or meeting needs. As one worker puts it; 'responding to anything that comes to the door'. One worker makes the interesting comment that neighbourhood work is not a parochial activity, describing it as 'intense but not isolated'.

Neighbourhood work is a term which has been adopted particularly by Henderson and Thomas.[15] Like the members of the sample using the term, they associate it with focus on a local community when they say:

> "Neighbourhood workers attach importance to the interaction of individuals, families and groups within local communities".

However, they go on to say:

> "we do not wish to give neighbourhood work a wholly geographical definition"...."Yet we are anxious to capture that connotation of neighbourhood which means close, face to face work with people committed to their community".

Again in common with our sample Henderson and Thomas appear to conceive of neighbourhood work adopting approaches which draw on other models of change activity. They say:

> "Neighbourhood work seeks to involve people at grass roots level in decisions and policies which affect them and their neighbourhoods. There is the expectation too that activity in neighbourhoods around a range of social, economic and political issues will permeate and influence other decision making arenas."

This last point reflects the view that neighbourhood work should not necessarily be seen as parochial.

(d) Community Care

Under the fourth most popular label; community care, which is again dominated by the responses of the Community Work Assistants, the comments tend to be rather generalised. However, they emphasise the roles of workers in promoting the development of preventive, community based, caring services. The term appears to reflect an approach which seeks to meet the needs of all sectors of the community who are potentially vulnerable, hence particular references to toddlers and the elderly. The role of volunteers is also embraced within this approach.

Overall the comments are clearly distinguished from those in the other categories, offering more consensual, conciliatory language, an attachment to basic values of caring for the vulnerable, with an absence of comments suggesting that complex analysis of need is required. This material is again consistent with textbook models. The following comments demonstrate the general trends: 'community care is prevention through a community approach', 'assisting the community to learn how to care for itself', 'concerned to enlist the support of volunteers and the

provision of caring services allied to client groups', 'about caring, in my case, especially for the elderly'.

The description given to community care by the workers reflects a tradition which has been associated with social work departments since the late sixties. The second Gulbenkian Study[16] described it as:

> "Community work as a method of social work practiced in the social services - preventive (as in areas of high social risk, or with vulnerable groups); supportive (as in group work with single parent families, ex prisoners or drug addicts); community selfhelp (as in promotion of children's playgroups, or the use of volunteer services)."

(e) Social Planning

The three workers identifying with the label social planning also offer comments in line with practice models. Here the emphasis is on, research, investigation and analysis of need leading to improved service delivery by public agencies. In addition there is emphasis on management of staff resources. All but three of the twelve comments are made by the two Community Development Organisers, identifying with this label. (It should be noted that one also associated himself with community development.)

These characteristics match those suggested by Khan[17] who defines social planning as: 'policy choice and programming in the light of facts projections and applications of values.'

(f) Community Organisation

The three workers identifying with the label community organisation stress a non-partisan style of work, seeing themselves as the means of

building strong organisations in areas of deprivation where organisational skills have generally been lacking.

Though these comments do not contradict text book definitions the number of comments is insufficient to fully assess the relationship. They do appear to reflect usage in American rather than British literature in that they focus on the generic process of organising within the community rather than on inter-organisational relationships between service agencies.[18]

Overall the pattern of responses under each label seems remarkably internally consistent and offers pictures of clearly distinguishable styles of work, except perhaps, in the case of neighbourhood work which is more concerned with the location of the worker than his work style.

Practice theories and their relationship to practice

How far the descriptions given under each label are reflected in the actual work recorded by the respondents is an important area for further consideration, as is the question of how consistent the reportage of workers valued activities is with the labels adopted. In relation to the former the evidence of Chapter 5, that the workers are predominantly involved in servicing and resourcing roles with community groups, suggests that the attachment to community development models is largely appropriate in that this may be seen as a way of facilitating the independent functioning of the groups. The evidence from the content analysis of limited involvement in tenants associations and housing campaigns, except by the Community Workers, is consistent with the generally low scoring of community action except in the Community Worker group where it scores much more highly. The emphasis in the content

analysis on the roles of Community Work Assistants in relation to youth and children's work also corresponds to their relatively high scoring of community care work and the way in which they describe the characteristics of neighbourhood work.

It would be reasonable to argue that a significant feature of a social planning approach to community work might be corporate working. The evidence from the content analysis of this not being an extensive activity generally, but more so for Community Development Organisers is consistent with the few workers identifying with the label and with the largest number of comments coming from Community Development Organisers. The extensiveness of Community Development Organisers' work with social work management and more extensive contacts with other professionals, as indicated in Chapter 6, could also be taken as an indicator of more social planning roles. Their attachment to community development as a label is, however, more consistent with their community oriented aspirations for their own work, as discussed in Chapter 7.

Generally, the evidence of Chapter 7 on the aspirations of the workers for their own practice, is remarkably consistent with the models of community work with which they tend to associate themselves. The predominant comments were described as offering a classical definition of community development work and this is the model with which the largest group of workers identify. Analysis of the tenor of the comments made indicated that about 16% could be said to correspond to the more radical community action model of community work. This compares closely with the figure of 20% identifying this as the basis of their practice in this chapter. The ranking of community care,

comparing these two sources of evidence, also appears reasonably consistent.

In relation to their evaluation of the actual work they had undertaken during the recorded month, also discussed in Chapter 7, there is again a high degree of consistency with these results. In particular, the emphasis in those comments on the value of process rather than task, corresponds to community development schools of thought.

Finally, it is perhaps worth noting that much of the comment on community development and community action models of practice and the comment by workers on valued activities attaches importance to the informal educational processes involved in community work. That only one worker identified with the label adult education should not therefore be taken as a dismissal of this aspect of community work, for many workers would appear to subsume an informal style of problem focussed adult education within other models of practice. This is of interest not least because it points up the dilemma as to where community work is most appropriately located in a local authority structure - is it primarily a service or an educational activity?

Summary

Respondents were asked to identify the label which most readily described the character and style of their work. The choices offered were: Adult Education, Community Care, Community Action, Social Planning, Community Development, Neighbourhood Work and Community Organisation. They were asked to go on to describe the central

characteristics that they believed this model to have. Only two people did not select one of the labels offered.

The most popular label, selected by 39% of the sample, was Community Development. It took first place overall and for Community Development Organisers, Senior Community Workers and Community Workers. The second most popular label was Community Action with 20% of responses. This was a label more favoured by Community Workers. Neighbourhood Work in the third place with 13% of responses and the Community Care in fourth place with 9% of responses, were most favoured by Community Work Assistants, in whose rank order they fell in first and second places. Other labels attracted very few responses.

These results show that Community Work Assistants not only have different patterns of practice, as revealed in the time-budget analysis, but also perceive themselves as belonging to different models of work than those of most of their colleagues. The more radical label: Community Action, is extensively used only by Community Workers but even here less than one-third adopt it.

Having identified the labels used, it was important to know what workers meant by them and how consistently they were used. The final question, therefore, asked workers to identify the characteristics of the label they had chosen.

In relation to the term: Community Development, responses are generally very consistent and reflect the way in which the label is most commonly used in community work literature. It is seen as concerned with promoting confidence among community members to become agents of change for the community without being dependent on outsiders. The process is seen as being educative in terms of the political and social

processes which affect the lives of people in the community. The community promotes self-help in its own terms and is supported to participate in decision-making processes which affect the area.

By contrast with the values of self-determination, and self-selected educational development, apparent under the heading Community Development, the characteristics associated with the term Community Action reveal a much harder more aggressive stance. As much as anything the change is in the style of language used to describe the activity. Terms used reflect more conflictual and polarised stances about the nature of the problems the community faces and the kinds of responses that can be made to them. Again, this is generally consistent with the way in which the term is used in community work literature. The language is of control and power struggles whereas in relation to Community Development, it was of participation and negotiated solutions to problems.

In relation to the label Neighbourhood work, the primary distinguishing characteristics seems to be the importance attached to the worker being located in the community, with an absence of comments indicating that complex analysis of need is required. Workers identify promotion of preventive community based caring services for groups such as the elderly, handicapped and toddlers. Volunteers are given some importance in this approach.

The use of the label Social Planning, though limited, is again consistent with practice theory, emphasising research, investigation, and analysis of need leading to improved service delivery by public agencies.

Overall, the pattern of responses under each label is remarkably consistent and offers pictures of clearly distinguishable styles of work except in the case of the label: Neighbourhood Work, which is more concerned with location than worker style. The pattern of labels chosen also seems fairly consistent with the actual work undertaken during the recorded month and with the aspirations for, and evaluations of, their own work by the sample.

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# PART VI

## Reflections

# Chapter 13.

## Community work and the state

In reviewing the evidence of this research it has already been possible not only to provide specific insights into the character of community work as practiced in Strathclyde Regional Council Social Work Department but also to reflect on some of the central themes and issues of community work debate in the U.K. generally. In these final chapters some of the debates which seem to me to be of particular significance and to which the evidence of the research has relevance will be taken further.

Being a study of community work sponsored by a major local authority many of its aspects which promote particular interest revolve around the tensions between the objectives and characteristics of the local state as a community work employer, the aspirations of the community workers themselves and the nature of community work. The issues raised by these tensions can be examined in a number of different dimensions. Firstly it is important to review recent trends in local government pertinent to community work practice and to place the findings in the context of the tenor of debate within British community work literature about community workers' relationships with the state. This is the subject matter of this chapter. In the following chapter, the specific context of a local authority social work department will be explored, including debate on the particular significance of the emergence of the idea of community social work. This is seen by many community workers as a

means of reformulating the functions of community workers by engaging the resources and energies of local communities to meet the traditional obligations placed on state social services.

The debate about community workers in the state is also about their relationships with other professional groups in local authority employment. This provides one of the themes for discussion in Chapter 15 and focusses particularly on social planning roles in community work. As Chapter 9 has already shown, relationships between community workers and the politicians are an important area for review, not least because community workers clearly perceive themselves as carrying political functions but within a professional role. Further exploration of these issues is also undertaken in Chapter 15. The themes considered in Chapter 16 are also evident from earlier chapters and concern the relationship between community workers as employees of the state, and the communities with which they actually work.

All of this material, considered alongside the earlier material in the study, necessitates a discussion of the implications for training of community workers. Given the role that they carry and the complex demands of the job, how appropriate is the current training process and how relevant are the knowledge and skills which are emphasised? This will lead into a discussion of community work and its professional identity. These are the concerns of Chapter 17.

The final chapter will summarise conclusions from the research for community workers, their managers and elected members.

In that Strathclyde Region is one of the largest employers of community workers in the country, it provides a particularly apposite context in which to review some of the major themes both of recent

trends in local government and of community work literature in relation to the role of community work within the state. Debates about the degree to which community work is a mechanism for social control of deviant or disadvantaged groups or a basis for radical social change have usually been associated with debates not only about the ideologies of community workers but equally about the influence exerted by the ideological orientations and organisational characteristics of the sponsors of the activity. Indeed it is often assumed that it is these latter factors which have most critical bearing on the form of community work practice in different settings. When, as in Strathclyde, a very high percentage of community workers are employed directly by the state or, as is more common elsewhere in the U.K., through sources of funding controlled by the state, it is clearly important to reflect on how community workers appear to understand the nature of their relationship to their sponsors, and to explore broader trends in local government which have a bearing on community work.

Significant recent trends in local government

Community work is one of the more recent occupations to emerge in local government though, as was shown in Chapter 1, it is by no means a universal phenomenon. Equally, its own ambivalence about whether it wants to be professionalised sets it apart from most of the other occupational groups. Nonetheless, it has emerged in the last twenty years as an apparently established feature of the activities of some local authorities such as Strathclyde.

In discussing community work in the local state it is important to set its development in an exploration of trends in local government.

Boaden[1] has argued that there are two powerful forces which have been regarded as critical to local government - the need to be 'democratic' and the need to be 'efficient'. Though it is not always clear what is meant by these terms they are generally viewed as being in tension with one another. He argues:

> "At the centre of the conflict between the two criteria of democracy and efficiency in local government lies the important question of the most appropriate scale of operation and organisation of local government. For those who believe in participant democracy, 'small is beautiful' while for those who want efficient local government 'big is better'!"

He suggests that the growth of scale of local government in this century reflects this desire for efficiency in an increasingly complex urban industrial society. It gives rise to four major themes which he identifies as: 'functional fragmentation'; 'centralisation of government'; 'professionalisation of service provision'; and 'the increasing remoteness of government from people'.

These themes are all relevant to consideration of the roles and dilemmas of community work and the state.

In relation to functional fragmentation, the increasing complexity and range of the statutory obligations of local government has seen a steady increase in the number of departments and the range of specialised workers within them. To some extent this trend has been checked in the last few years with restrictions on local government expenditure, nonetheless the local authority remains a highly complex bureaucratic structure with consequent difficulties in relating to its consumers in straightforward and understandable ways. At least one of the attractions in employing community workers is that they will act as

intermediaries between citizens and the council. The Strathclyde Regional Review of Community Work in 1978,[2] for example refers to the: '...community worker who is expected to carry out a pivotal role between community and authority.' (*their underlining*). It is worth noting too that this function was acknowledged by the workers in this study as a central aspiration of elected members for their work (see Chapter 9). In discussing the workers' views of the community groups they also referred extensively to being expected to be a channel for communication between communities and the local authority, particularly in terms of obtaining resources for local activities (see Chapter 10). In that the actual activities of the workers (see Chapter 5) place heavy emphasis on the servicing of the needs of community groups by assisting them to obtain resources of various kinds, this intermediary function can be seen to be extensive. It is noticeable, however, that in discussing their own aspirations for their work (Chapter 7) the workers do not give it high priority. In his 1984 review[3] of community work though, the Director of Social Work acknowledges the centrality of the role but stresses that the function of the community worker is not to speak either for the community or for the council. He says:

> "The worker's primary concern is to assist the community to maintain a dialogue with the authority at a level and in a form appropriate to the issues in question. In this sense the community worker is not a 'mediator' bringing sides together, but more of a 'consultant' and an enabler to the community."

It can be argued then that the fragmentation of functions and increased complexity in local government is in a sense being compensated for by the employment of community workers. This is not unique in the public sector, for example, the emergence of Community Health Councils

in relation to the National Health Service, some of which adopt a community development approach, represents a similar trend.

Since, despite current trends towards privatisation, it is difficult not to envisage a continuation of the complex functional fragmentation of local government, it seems likely that this may secure a long term role for community work. However, the way in which community work is used, and indeed whether it is regarded as an appropriate means, will vary from authority to authority. Generally it appears to be democratic socialist authorities like Strathclyde or Sheffield which have been most attracted to this approach and it is suggested that this reflects a view that disadvantaged communities need to be empowered to ensure that positive discrimination is achieved. Without this kind of objective more conventional public relations methods are more likely to be employed to improve public knowledge of local government services. Nor is it the case that left wing authorities have universally promoted community work, indeed it may be argued that in Militant led Liverpool, for example, a centralist authoritarianism ran counter to the notion of empowerment of local community interests (illustrated, for example, in the long running dispute between black community organisations and the council over the appointment of the Community Relations Officer.)

The form which community work in local government is likely to take must be considered carefully in terms of the particular dispositions and objectives of different employers. The potential seems to exist for radical alliances between community workers and the local state on the basis of common social ideals but reflective evaluation of performance will be needed to measure whether outcomes are matching objectives. Community work itself is not an inherently radical occupation, as is

indicated by the evidence of this study, and the objectives of employers are rarely consistent or constant as power and influence in the political system shift. In particular it has to be recognised that local government does not operate independently of the influence of central government. This point leads into a discussion of the second major theme identified by Boaden: 'centralisation of government'.

Centralisation of power has been an inexorable trend contributed to in different ways by governments of different political persuasions in the post-war period. The emergence of the post-Beveridge welfare state has been a major source of the growth of local government but the statutory framework within which functions like education, personal social services or housing has developed has ensured only limited variations in forms of service provided. The welfare state itself, for example in development of income maintenance services, can be viewed as a major feature of centralism in government. However, it is only one feature of this trend. Under socialist governments, though the trend has now been reversed, the process of nationalisation of major industries and the idea of a planned economy were basic features of this centralism. The emergence of the radical conservatism of the present government has seen a return to free market economic principles and privatisation, but while this aspect of state control may have been reversed for ideological reasons, other aspects of government policy, especially in relation to local government, show even greater desire for centralisation of power. Most particularly the control of local government finance through rate capping of 'overspending' authorities and plans to replace local rates with the community charge are central. It should not be suggested, however, that this trend is just a

consequence of the present government. Darke and Walker,[4] for example, writing in 1977 argued that:

> "Dependent upon central finance and subject to a blanket of expenditure controls the ability of local government to respond to local needs and to innovate is increasingly hamstrung by the lack of control over necessary resources."

It would not, however, be appropriate to view local authorities as innocent victims of the process of centralisation for they have themselves shown an increasing tendency to centralisation of power especially in councils consistantly dominated by one political party. In particular the authority of the party caucus relative to the formal committees and the council itself and the growth of corporate management have tended to place power in fewer and more remote hands. Similarly the growth of the local authority associations, as bargaining organisations with central government, has contributed significantly to the remoteness and delocalisation of politics.

There are many more ways in which these centralising trends could be illustrated, however, the pattern is clear. What then is the connection between the process of centralisation and the role of community work and what implications does it have for the scope of local authority based community work practice? In relation to the first question, community work can be viewed as part of a wider reaction to centralisation based on a number of different arguments. Firstly, that democratic principle requires citizen participation as a means of legitimising the authority of government. Secondly, that many problems have specifically local dimensions and require to be responded to in the context of local conditions. Thirdly, that empirical principles demand that lessons are learned from direct local community experience of problems. Fourthly,

that if community participation is to be realised it has to be based around concerns with which ordinary people can identify. These are often matters related to local circumstances or are wider problems which have particular local manifestations to which people can more easily relate. Fifthly, that centralised government cannot make proper use of the valuable resources of local communities and their organisations. Sixthly, that remote centralised services tend to engender high levels of dependence and inhibit the development of local resources and self help activity. It is not only that resources may be wasted but that local responses may be both more valued because of the effort people put into them and possibly more effective. This point is particularly reflected in ideas of partnership between public service agencies and community and voluntary organisations which lie, for example, behind the emergence of community social work (see Chapter 14).

Amongst the writers who have offered a philosophical underpinning for the principles of localisation is Schon[5] who has argued that:

> "Government cannot play the role of 'experimenter to the nation' seeking first to identify the correct solution, then to train society at large in its adaptation. The opportunity for learning is primarily in discovered systems at the periphery, not in the nexus of official policies at the centre.'

The principles of localisation appear from the evidence of the study to be well established among community work staff in Strathclyde Region Social Work Department. They are primarily motivated by a desire to respond to conditions and experiences in local communities (see Chapter 11), they most commonly identify with models of community work practice which stress the empowerment of local people in relation to their own affairs (see Chapter 12) and the ways in which they spend their time are

consistent with this (see Chapters 5 and 6). Their practice is in turn broadly consistent with the employer's objectives that they should: 'assist communities to organise around locally defined needs and issues'.

The persistance of centralising trends both by central and local government but the concern that this promotes in relation to local democracy, may be central to explaining the attraction of community work to some local authorities.

The theme of professionalisation of service provision was the third identified by Boaden. The post-war growth in scale and responsibilities of local government has spawned the emergence of a wide range of categories of worker keen to promote their professional status. Social workers, town planners, public health inspectors, educational psychologists, housing officers and many others have asserted that the knowledge, skills and responsibilities associated with their tasks require recognition of exclusive expertise and hence the confirming of professional status and authority.

As I have already indicated in the brief review of the history of the development of community work in the United Kingdom, in Chapter 1, there has been considerable tension within the occupation as to whether it should seek equivalent professional status to other local government employees. Much of the difficulty, as the later review in this chapter of recent literature on the relationship between community workers and the state will show, has been seen as associated with the political nature of community work objectives. Professionalisation has been viewed as casting community work primarily in service development, rather than community or social action, roles. Equally, it has been

argued that professional status is associated with exclusiveness on the part of an occupational group based on academic and professional qualification but that such a position contradicts basic principles of community work. These principles are concerned with empowering disadvantaged people whose influence is diminished, at least in part, precisely because they lack the status of professionals. Yet at the same time community workers express a desire, as in the sample studied here, to influence colleagues within their own and other local authority departments and recognise that one of their difficulties in so doing is that they have not been able to secure parallel professional authority.

The broader questions of professionalisation in local government have wider implications in relation to the final theme identified by Boaden: 'the increasing remoteness of government from people'. It is apparent from the experience of Strathclyde that this has much to do with the quality of relationships between local people and officers of the local authority.

One of the consequences of the professionalisation of local government has been a tendency to increasing authority of officers relative to elected members. The parameters within which political decisions are made appear to have been increasingly conditioned by the administrative decisions and priorities of officers. This factor has been widely noted in discussions of local government, Cheetham et al,[7] for example, argue:

> "Another feature of local government.... which is not always fully appreciated, has been the development during the past century of a highly professional core of administrators to whom the politicians delegate most or all of their decision making responsibilities. Consequently the style of government in many British local authorities can be described as 'administrative politics', in which most of the controversy over decision making takes place in a purely private context."

The influence of administrators over politicians has been a concern in Strathclyde Region and, in adopting approaches such as Members/Officer groups to review key policy areas and in Area Development Teams, the Council has sought to redress the balance and assert political control. Nonetheless the influence of the professional values of officers and their power to manipulate decision making has to be acknowledged. Levin,[8] for example, has identified a series of strategies which administrators may use to ensure that their priorities are reflected in policy. He refers to: 'administrative investment' where scarce administrative resources are tied up in a project before it comes to formal committee decisions by politicians. A variant on this he calls 'multiple clearance' in which the administrator gains approval for the proposal from as many sources as possible before it becomes public. Open debate is prejudiced by preconditioning participants with arguments which favour a particular outcome. Levin also refers to the 'single proposal procedure' in which debate is focussed on just one of a possible range of options for tackling a problem. Evidence about the feasibility of alternative approaches is not brought forward and hence not considered. He links this to the use of the 'limited study', that is, one which purports to have considered the options but is in fact biased towards a particular response. Other strategies which administrators may use include setting short deadlines for decisions, deliberately not publicising contentious matters, or 'hiding' unpalatable decisions within more acceptable ones.

The adoption of strategies such as those outlined is often a reflection of the desire of the professional administrators to promote policies which are broadly congruent with their professional values and

of the desire to sustain continuity of policy development despite political change. The extent to which such subversive strategies are employed is open to debate and the process may not be as conscious as Levin appears to suggest. Nonetheless it is important to recognise the contribution which they may make to the remoteness of local government.

Some of the fears expressed by the workers in this study (see Chapter 8 in particular) relate to their concerns about the influence in the Social Work Department of professional dispositions on the adherence to the social strategy. Here community workers are on delicate ground for they are formally accountable through the line management of their employing department but may feel that its behaviour sometimes fails to reflect the principles of the Council's policy. However, in working with local community organisations and their local electd members, it can be argued that community workers have an opportunity to assist in the opening up of decision making in ways which challenge the remoteness of local government arising from the persistance of professional power.

Such a role presents some problems however. In particular it places community workers in a relationship with professional colleagues in local government in which it may be difficult to forge trust since questions of loyalty may often be in doubt when consumer empowerment is an express objective of practice.

It is not only the issues associated with professionalisation which interrelate with the theme of remoteness of local government, so too do those of fragmentation and centralisation in that these contribute to the complexity and physical remoteness of centres of government. The sheer size of local government units as they were reorganised in the 1970's and the emergence of corporate management approaches have been

crucial. This is especially so in Scotland where the Regional Councils not only serve wide geographical areas and in some cases very large populations but also take responsibility for the key services of education and social work which in English connurbations remain in the lower tier Metropolitan Boroughs rather than the Metropolitan County Councils. However, in part the remoteness also relates to a feeling of distance, and in multiply disadvantaged areas, where evidence of governmental failure is all too apparent, of alienation.

Whether it is a reflection of the Region's social strategy, sheer good luck or the absence of a very substantial black and asian population in most of the most disadvantaged areas around which explosive tensions might emerge, is unknown, but Strathclyde has experienced little of the communal violence which has exploded in many other British inner cities. There is undoubtedly frustration, disillusion and anger associated with lack of jobs, poor housing and inadequate amenities, however, as the Scottish vote in the 1987 general election suggests the blame appears to be placed squarely with central government. The Regional Social Strategy and the parallel policies of some of the District Councils, most notably in Glasgow, have identified local government with the interests of the most disadvantaged. They have not claimed that their policies could independently reverse the structural processes which lie behind the problems of disadvantage but there is more than a rhetorical commitment on the part of the Regional Council to positive discrimination.

The community workers studied in this research have been central to the strategy. Whilst they have expressed many frustrations about the performance of their role and the commitment of their employers to the

objectives set, they have been party to one ofthe most substantial attempts in British local government history to build links between disadvantaged communities and the council. They have attempted to tackle the remoteness of local government and make it relevant to local needs.

This has been done in a number of ways, most notably, through the targeting of urban programme and redirecting mainstream service priorities towards the geographical areas most characterised by multiple deprivation and establishing in them mechanisms for consulting local opinion. The use of corporate member-officer groups known as Area Development Teams to tackle specific local issues in areas of deprivation, the establishment of a decentralised system of small grants committees and an increasing trend to localise the premises from which departments operate have also been significant. Criticism of the effectiveness of these approaches has been reflected in the comments of the workers studied here (see Chapter 8 and 9 particularly) but as has already been noted the Regional Council itself has acknowledged limitations in its approach. For example its Social Strategy for the Eighties states:[9]

> "We have probably expected too much of local initiatives and certainly have not provided enough support for them."

The workers studied here have, then, been operating within a local government setting which has been subject to all of the general trends which Boaden identifies. The influences of 'functional fragmentation', 'centralisation of power', 'professionalisation' and 'remoteness' from consumers are central to establishing an appreciation of the context of community work practice in local authorities not only for workers but

equally their employers and consumers. How then have community work writers reviewed the relationship between community work and the state?

Recent community work debate about its relationships with the state.

Though his comments have to some extent been overtaken by the emergence of Thatcherite, new right, radical conservatism, Lambert[10] has offered a useful review of a range of attitudes in community work towards the state. He provides a useful starting point for a brief review of debate on this issue in recent community work literature.

> "For the Conservative and the Liberal, the modern social democratic state is essentially a benign institution - the means of ensuring justice, fairness, opportunity and equality. For the socialist and the anarchist it is essentially repressive.... So for the Conservative and the Liberal, participatory community work seeks to enhance relationships between government and the people: for the anarchist participation aims to release people from their dependence on controlling institutions...."

For the Marxist or socialist he argues:

> "participation is undoubtedly a fact of life; but not as a means of affecting redistribution so much as a means of alerting the top to pressures and alignments among lower participants so that the problem of order - social control can be effectively tackled."

Reflecting these broad distinctions, Twelvetrees[11] (drawing on Baldock[12]) identifies two broad schools of community work thinking - the 'professional' and the 'socialist'. Though he notes the inconsistency of workers and the lack of a necessary correlation between their theoretical framework and the actual practice, this distinction largely reflects the differences betwen the pluralist view of the state and the socialist perspective. The former is well illustrated by community work literature emanating from the National Institute for Social Work

particularly in Henderson, Thomas and Jones'[13] notion of 'interjacence'. They say:

> "We have a picture of community work (at a societal level) and community workers (at a local level) inhabiting the space between local groups and individuals and local and central organisations. In this space, community work and community workers, are not static; they move around as they are pushed and pulled by various forces that emanate either from community groups or from bureaucracies..."

Though acknowledging the fears of workers about being 'contaminated or sucked in by established professions or agencies', the idea of interjacence seems to follow a well established pluralist perspective well illustrated in the Gulbenkian report'[14] of 1968 which said:

> "Community work is essentially about the interrelations between people and social change, how to help people and the providers of services to bring about a more comfortable 'fit' between themselves and constant change, how to survive and grow as persons in relation to others."

In that these pluralist models of community work emphasise the servicing of the machinery of the state they reflect functionalist social theory. They do not deny that change may be needed but tend to emphasise incrementalist approaches and consensual methods. They can be contrasted with the socialist formulations which have tended to be very concerned by the degree to which they believe community work has become an integral part of the apparatus of a state machine serving powerful vested interests. Such commentators believe that the objectives of community workers are compromised by their association with the state. In particular, Cockburn,'[15] in a study highly influential in community work circles, has argued that essentially the function of community work as a state sponsored activity is a means to incorporate radical dissent by drawing critical community organisations into ineffectual participation

in marginal areas of state decision making. She argues that it is not just approaches to community work which are based on social pathological explanations of poverty and deprivation or approaches based on social planning conceptions that serve state interests. Methods derived from a social conflict perspective are seen as equally beneficial to the state in sustaining social equilibrium and perpetuating the power of the interests of capital. She states:

> "....the state needs community workers for many reasons.... So in spite of the risk of explosive conflict (between local authority and activist groups, between officers and members and between traditional and progressive members) the local council does not always pull in the horns, nor do community workers who are into conflict always get the sack. Instead the conflict is moderated and converted, wherever possible, into a style of governance. There are two ways in which conflict in small amounts and certain contexts can help to maintain equilibrium in capitalist societies. First it can defuse a situation leading to greater and more fundamental conflicts..... Second, a degree of conflict safely contained in an electoral representative arena can redeem the idea of democracy. It makes it seem as if a genuine class struggle were taking place through the vote. Too much apathy and quietism and the system appears a charade losing its ability to legitimate the state in the people's eyes."

I have quoted Cockburn at some length as there can be little doubt that her arguments promoted a crisis of confidence for many community workers who were disconcerted by the idea that conflict oriented practice, based on a socialist perspective, could actually be seen as functional to sustaining the status quo. Community work, in Marcusian[16] terms, was to be viewed as a process of 'repressive tolerance'. Such concerns were reflected in Marxist critiques of community work. Corrigan,[17] for example, went so far as to suggest that

> "the state is characterised by one of two major symbols of control in capitalist society - the tank or the community worker!"

It was the dilemmas raised by debates around these issues which prompted Waddington'[18] in 1979 to argue:

> "....the future destiny of community work, like its present and past, will be inextricably bound up with that of the state; and the crisis of community work can only be resolved by personal and collective clarifications of that relationship....."

In an exercise in futurology he predicted that the 1980's would see a cementing of the functional role of community work for the state. He argued that:

> "It will be their (community workers') task to manage the multiplicity of new groups and organisations which will be brought into being to engage the long term structurally unemployed and to provide the new community based social services. An increasing part of their work will involve the professional supervision of a new tier of para professional, sub professional and non-professional volunteer workers. The new community workers will act as the outreach agent, the eyes and ears, of the corporately managed major establishment institutions in helping them to better monitor their environments and manage feedback and to handle increasingly complex inter-organisational relationships..... The new community workers will spend an increasing part of their work in deskbound activities and will do less direct fieldwork with clients. They will be more involved in management, in making policy and in controlling budgets and resource allocation...."

For Waddington this was not an attractive vision. He believed that 'radical dissenters' would 'need to look for the relatively autonomous spaces in the new system and to seek out the subversible areas, identifying and working on the contradictions'. Radical practice then was seen as an almost clandestine activity operating in the 'nooks and crannies' of the state. It is interesting however, that Waddington did not dismiss radical community work in the state. In this he reflects a position noted by Lambert'[19] when he says:

> "For others, though, it remains the case that the struggle for a just socialist society is made with and through the state apparatus whose control and legitimation are by no means absolute."

This line of argument is taken up by Blagg and Derricourt[20]. They argue that a practice based on structural class conflict theory is feasible within the state and that: 'a crude anti-state view has dogged the development of community work practice.' To use Frierian[21] terminology they seek a mode of operation within the state which promotes the liberation rather than the domestication of disadvantaged groups. They distinguish their view of community work from models derived from 'functionalist and systems theory' which have been used to 'promote consensus based community work practice'. (Here particularly they cite the work of Henderson and Thomas[22]). They regard these latter approaches as the dominant influence in the development of community work and as reflecting the traditions of Gulbenkian,[23] Seebohm,[24] Skeffington[25] and Home Office view (of the CDP and Urban programme[26]) discussed in Chapter 1. They justify their arguments by challenging the monolithic view of the state, arguing:

> "Firstly, we need to see the state as a far more complex and ambiguous formation than hitherto, not reducible either to its purely repressive apparatus or to a simple instrument of the ruling class. Secondly, we need to see the state as encompassing more than just its administrative 'commanding heights'."

It might be regarded as cynical to question whether a 'new theory of the state' is needed in community work because community workers are dependent for a livelihood on employment from its resources, but as Baldock[27] has commented:

> "The key boundary in community work is that on which all radical community workers stand between the world of welfare professions in which they gain the means to live and the movements for change to which they belong. To be in the welfare state but not of it is the crucial requirement made of them by the commitment to which they lay claim."

In a study examining the Home Office C.D.P. programme and community planning in London Docklands, Peter Marris[28] has argued that much of the debate within community work about its relationship with the state has become highly damaging to the potential influence that it could have. He suggests:

> "Radicals - and increasingly, too, people more influenced by liberal, democratic traditions of reform - characteristically represent to themselves the relationships which underlie the persistence of poverty and social injustice in profoundly inhibiting and self defeating metaphors."

He argues that there is in fact a much higher degree of common perception between sponsors of community work and its practitioners than the tenor of debate might suggest. This compatibility is to be found in the ideals towards which programmes are directed rather than in the analysis of the means by which they may be achieved. By way of example he cites the commitment of the British Labour Party to egalitarian social welfare as being compatible with the ideals of C.D.P. staff. On the other hand he suggests that the class basis of their analysis and proposals for action actually militates against effectiveness. He argues:

> "So long as government policy and community action justify themselves by the same ideals, community action has scope for influence on government's own terms, even if its ideology is in other ways radically opposed to the assumptions of government.....Movements for change are empowered by the convergence of social ideals expressed in principles of action."

From this standpoint Marris is critical of the tendency of radical community workers to formulate responses in terms of crude and simplistic conflicts between capital and labour which fail to acknowledge the complex range of competing interest group relationships in contemporary capitalist societies. He argues that class conflicts can be viewed in terms of the control of risks and the displacement of uncertainty onto others, the response therefore should not be to reinforce the conflicts which constantly damage the weak but to more broadly distribute risk and uncertainty thus reinforcing mutual bonds. Allied to this he argues the case for social planning:

> "....since planning means, essentially, controlling uncertainty....."

The lesson he suggests:

> "....is not to reject planning in favour of political struggles, but to incorporate into those struggles a demand for effective, open, collective planning, as a crucial part of carrying out any practical ideal of social justice. Otherwise, the struggle does not lead towards any resolution except competitive bargaining between different kinds of interests, and that cannot protect the weaker and more vulnerable members of society."

The contribution offered by Marris to the debate provides community workers with an antidote to some of the crude anti-state rhetoric, it offers a direction to the radical worker which, though pragmatic, may reduce cynicism borne of a sense of impotence. The state, particularly given its planning powers, remains a target for influence but can also be a partner for change.

This brief review of some of the arguments about the location and functions of community work is of interest in relation to the evidence of the research project in that it illustrates some of the context of

debate within which the workers operate. As we have seen, their own dispositions towards the state as revealed in their views of their managers and political masters as well as the profile of their actual activities, suggests that they experience some of the conflicts outlined. However, the tensions may have less to do with a radical critique of practice held by the workers than more basic frustrations of professional identity (see Chapter 17). Indeed the profile of the work actually being undertaken suggests that the practice is closer to that predicted by Waddington[29] than the more radical formulation to which the literature sometimes aspires. As Chapter 5 showed the content of work is oriented primarily to servicing rather than issue based action and has a particular emphasis on the provision of material and financial resources for local community groups which themselves provide local services. There is little indication in the comments of the Strathclyde workers of the kind of trenchant critique offered by CDP staff of their programme when they stated:[30]

> "in the final analysis the 'deprivation initiatives' were not about eradicating poverty at all, but about managing poor people."

It may be that the workers in Strathclyde became involved at a time when community work aspirations were in any case more limited and perhaps more realistic possibly as a product of the lack of parallel presentation by CDP workers of viable models for effective practice, but the impression is of a workforce oriented more to the 'professional' than the 'socialist' school.

If community work can be categorised as belonging to conservative, liberal reformist or radical/socialist schools, it is apparent that on

this evidence the bulk of the work being undertaken falls into the first two categories. Only a minority of workers espouse community action approaches while the majority are undertaking community development or community care roles. There is a relatively high level of consistency between the workers' perceptions of the work they undertake and the actual activity recorded by them. If anything there appears be more service orientated and less campaigning work than workers' aspirations might imply. However, the discrepancy between hopes and realities is not excessive. With this in mind, the very negative relationship which workers appear to experience with the senior managers of the Social Work Department and the fairly negative views of the Council are not to be understood in terms of a clash of radical aspirations with a conservative working environment. Certainly many workers seem to view the intentions of the Regional Council and the Social Work Department as quite conservative, but their own activities and aspirations are not generally particularly radical. The workers are commenting on their experience. This leads to questions about why the statements of policy adopted by the Regional Council in relation to both community work and deprivation (see Chapter 2) which are themselves reformist rather than conservative, seem not to be reflected in the view that the workers have of the policy or the experience that they have of their management and its interpretation of the policy. Put another way, are the approaches of the community workers more in touch with the intentions of the policy than those of their managers and many of the elected members with whom they interact? Or, is their mutual misunderstanding based on a lack of appreciation of the relative roles that each party has to play?

Whatever the explanation, there is a clear need to explore and reform the relationship between community work staff and the Council and their employing department. These are themes of the following chapters.

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# Chapter 14

## Community Work and the Social Work Department

As Chapter 8 has already shown the relationship between the workers and their managers in the Social Work Department is particularly fraught. Evidence of other research studies (Thomas and Warburton,[1] Crusaz and Davies[2]) suggests that this is not a problem peculiar to community work in Strathclyde. Turning then to the specific departmental context of practice, attention needs to be given not only to the relationship between community work staff and their managers but also their social work colleagues.

In discussing the relationships with their employing department it is important to consider how far the quality of these relationships is a particular reflection of the nature of community work or its practitioners and managers and whether such tensions are not also common to many other occupations. In teaching, nursing, or the police force, for example, there are also tensions between 'frontline' workers and their bosses which reflect differences of perception and belief about both the purposes of the activity and the way in which it should be undertaken. Indeed almost all subordinates experience frustrations when confronted with the power of their superiors. However, it is often argued that the ideologies and theories of practice on which community work operates present particularly fertile ground for conflicts within a bureaucratic organisational setting. As Chapter 1 suggests in reviewing the development of community work ideas and practice in the U.K.; the degree of tensions might be considered likely to reflect the degree of

compatibility between the particular practice model favoured by the worker and the managers. For example, approaches based on the community integration approach are less likely to be problematic in that community work is a mechanism for promoting changes in local communities to produce a conformity to wider social norms and values usually set by the state itself. Moving into non-directive approaches problems are more likely because the consumer of community work services is accorded sovereignty over both objectives and means of achieving them. These may or may not be congruent with the views of the sponsor of the community worker. In the post-CDP era the emergence of an overtly political strand within community work which has based much of its practice on the assumption that the state does not serve the interests of disadvantaged groups has heightened the likelihood of conflict with local authority employers. It should be noted here, however, that many of these employers, Strathclyde included, readily acknowledge the role that the state may play in perpetuating structural disadvantage but draw distinctions between different facets of the state and do not presume its incapacity to respond to disadvantaged people. This suggests that the position adopted by Marris[3], as discussed in the previous chapter, has potential.

Community work, then, contains all the normal potential for hostility in a heirarchical structure but by the nature of its varying social change objectives, which may not always be shared by workers and employers, potentially it has particularly problematic features. These are not unique to community work but may be particularly pronounced.

In discussing the findings of the study in terms of the relationships between community workers and their managers in Chapter 8,

it was suggested that workers clearly experience what they consider to be a lack of understanding and appreciation of the nature and purposes of community work. Given the recent emergence of community work as a social work activity and the lack of knowledge or experience of it among many social worker managers, this is perhaps not surprising. Responsibilities for producing a more positive relationship lie on both sides. The lack of attention to analysis and reflection by community workers revealed in the time budget analysis (see Chapter 5) suggests little attempt is being made by workers to examine or explain their work to outsiders. Ill informed debates are rarely other than acrimonious. Community workers need to do more to explain themselves, their roles and objectives. No amount of information can, however, be heard by the deaf. Social work managers have to be prepared to listen and learn about community work. They are unlikely to do this unless community workers are also prepared to listen and learn about social work. This process is not facilitated by the fact that less than a third of the workers with qualifications were trained in social work. (See Chapter 4) This is not a plea that all community workers should have social work training, but that where workers trained in a different discipline move into a new host area, attention should be given to the inevitable tensions it will produce. In-service training of a compensatory nature is required both for community work staff and their managers. Simply attempting to integrate workers more fully with the wider functions of the department may well be unhelpful because it acts as a threat to the identity that they hold as community workers. There is no evidence that those workers more fully integrated into the work of the Social Work Department, namely the Community Development Officers feel more

positive about their relationship with social work managers. Similarly, though Community Workers and Community Work Assistants commonly attend staff meetings with other social work staff, it does not lead on to collaborative practice or more positive feelings.

However, given that the workers are not characterised by a radical orientation towards their practice my general conclusions about the difficulties of the relationship with their managers are that they are not to be explained by ideological or theoretical clashes, indeed my conclusions are similar to comments made by Briscoe[4] in relation to the difficulties of community work in social services departments when she states:

> "The drawbacks and difficulties in using community work approaches in social service departments which would hinder their value being apparent seem to rise from structural and organisational problems within the department rather than from the nature of community work. Lack of planning in the development of community work, lack of understanding of the implications of different activities and lack of support and resource planning for community work positions seem to have caused many problems. The viewing of community work as a peripheral activity which involves only specialised staff and no others has prevented departments from reaping the full benefits of community work."

However, whereas Briscoe appears to place the emphasis on the managers of the departments I would also stress the need for community workers themselves to take more direct responsibility for establishing their own roles. Strathclyde appears not to deserve the criticism of lack of planning in the development of community work in that, as Chapter 2 indicated, it has clear policy statements. However, the confused range of organisational settings from which workers actually practice and the complex range of accountability (see Chapter 4) suggests that practice does not necessarily match the intent of policy.

There may well be a further problem arising from a lack of middle management skills appropriate to community work within the social work department. This problem is frequently cited in discussion of community work in social work settings, Leissner and Joslin[5] discussing a Family Advice Centre project for example comment that:

> "The Family Advice Centre can be said to have provided a community work model for the area team, and the team's participation in the centre's activities provided opportunity to learn new methods....and to experiment with new attitudes and relationships. It soon became clear however, that a number of serious problems arose due to the fact that this experience was not shared by the professional and administrative 'higher echelons' of the social services department upon whom the area team has to rely for support."

Whereas in the Leissner example the practice of community work seems to have promoted positive collaborative relationships between community workers and their social work colleagues, the general pattern in Strathclyde seems to indicate that this is a difficult relationship. It is perhaps surprising that this is so at a time when a community orientation to social work is not only being given prominence locally but also in discussions surrounding the Barclay report[6] on, 'Social Workers their Roles and Tasks'. The research provides little evidence of extensive or systematic collaboration on joint projects.

If community work is to effectively establish its identity and credibility in the social work department the apparent mutual disinterest between the two groups of workers needs to be broken down. Given a corporate anti-deprivation policy intended to inform practice across all departments of the council it appears that community workers are not actively promoting a dialogue with their colleagues about approaches to change in disadvantaged communities. This might well

be accomplished by more shared practice and evaluation. The fear of cooption and absorption may well lie at the root of the isolation of the community work staff, but it is a truism to point out that without engagement little influence on practice in social work is likely. The overall flavour of the comments of workers on relationships with their social work colleagues and the isolated pattern of their work would appear to reflect the description of relationships between community workers and social workers offered by Baldock[7] ten years prior to this study. He says:

> "The problem between community workers and social workers is that social workers, though themselves basically caseworkers, regard community work as part of the social work profession, while the majority of community workers appear to reject this assertion. This rejection is reinforced and rendered emotionally charged by the fact that most social workers are employed by local authorities and by the often misinformed and stereotyped pictures that community workers have of social work. It is further reinforced by the fact that community work as part of the middle ground between social work and education..... has no obvious major group of employers and no establishment that belongs to it that has the power and authority to recognise courses leading to qualification in community work."

Whilst there is apparently much scope for collaborative action between community workers and other members of the Social Work Department, it is important to recognise too that community workers need space to practice their own skills and need to sustain an occupational identity which is distinct. At present this appears to be promoted quite aggresively but unproductively. If their identity were less threatened inside social work there might actually emerge a higher level of collaboration because it could be based on a more open and honest dialogue about the potentials and limitations of community work.

The province of community care provides a good example of where there is a need for more effective dialogue, in this case between community work and domicillary services. The relationship between state service provision and community self-help and voluntary action is fraught with difficulties. Currently the same department is promoting all three approaches but there is little evidence of exploration of the most appropriate ways of integrating caring services to vulnerable groups. This is an area where the generally undervalued function of social planning as a community work activity could be much more extensively employed.

Returning to the discussion at the beginning of this section about the causes of the tensions between community workers and their social work managers and colleagues, as I have already suggested, it is difficult not to conclude that the factors which promote the conflicts may have less to do with difference in objectives and ideological orientations than to do with more straightforward issues of occupational security and identity. No doubt there are examples of fraught relationships based on ideological conflicts but the actual nature of the workers' practice suggests that for community workers to see this as the predominant explanation is self delusion. It is more plausible in the Strathclyde setting at least, to see the conflicts arising from insecurity among community work staff about their place and status within the activities of the Social Work Department.

This insecurity may be explained in a number of ways. Central to it I would suggest is the problem that workers have in feeling that they belong. Though their work is given a statutory justification by reference to Section 12 of the Social Work Scotland Act, the nature of

this statute does not necessarily have to be interpreted as requiring the employment of community workers. Social workers, by contrast, are a necessity to meet a range of statutory obligations to a variety of vulnerable groups, such as children at risk, offenders or the mentally ill. In itself this difference may produce a sense of vulnerability borne of marginality to the statutory obligations of social work. Social Work managers may not be hostile towards community work activities as such, but, in interpreting their role, may see it as less central to social work services than other activities. Alternatively, they may feel that it is a luxury, or resent its scope for innovative developmental work, or feel that its resources should be deployed more directly to support the central statutory obligations of social work. These are not stances which are based on overt ideological conflict but on the realities of organisational pressures in social work as they perceive them.

Another important set of reasons for the apparent insecurity of community workers may relate to the ad hoc way in which community work employment has grown in the Region and its consequent diversity in patterns of deployment and management of workers. Subsequent to this study restructuring[8] of the Social Work Department has been undertaken introducing a standard pattern of accountability of community workers through Area Managers (formerly titled Area Officers). Though community workers have expressed concern about the capacity of the Area Managers to appreciate the role of community work they will at least be in a consistent pattern of accountability to the organisation. However, it may be more difficult in this new arrangement for workers to sustain working relationships with teams of comunity worker colleagues since

they will be more widely distributed between area social work teams. The integration into generic social work teams is an experience which at the time of the research did not produce a more positive orientation to social work colleagues or managers. Indeed this organisational integration may well be experienced as a further process which fragments community work and reduces not only a clear sense of occupational identity but also the capacity for collective reflection, analysis and evaluation of the contribution of community work to the Regional Deprivation strategy and social change more generally. However, it may be a process which community workers will find difficult to resist, not only because they have failed to produce credible evaluation of their practice which could be used to justify alternative approaches but, more importantly, because trends in Strathclyde are consistent with a broader national climate of debate about the place of community work in social work departments. A debate which has produced the somewhat ambiguous concept of community social work.

Community work and emergence of community social work

In discussing the general character of recent debate in British community work literature about relationships between community work and the state, I have already referred in the previous chapter to Paul Waddingston's[9] predictions in the late seventies as to likely trends in the eighties. In referring to the likelihood that it would become the task of community work to: 'provide the new community based social services', he accurately anticipated a central development, which, given the frustrations that the workers in this study have shown towards social work, deserves consideration.

As noted in Chapter 1, a trend towards a more community oriented social work practice became evident from the late sixties in the Seebohm[10] report and, in the Scottish context, through the Social Work Scotland Act[11] duty to 'promote social welfare' and the more detailed guidance provided in the Social Work Services Group circular SW11/69.[12] It said that the duty to promote social welfare:

> ".....involves making efforts... to encourage the development of conditions whether for individuals, for families or for larger groups which enable them to deal with difficulties as they arise through their own resources or with the help of the resources of their own community."

As we have seen, this circular has been used by Strathclyde as the basis on which its investment in community work in the Social Work Department has been justified. The circular goes on, for example, to say:

> ".....where the problem involves a group of people, the local authority may... find their most useful contribution will be to arrange meetings and discussions, to foster communications between individuals and groups in the same community and generally to build up the ability of each community to help with the solution of its own problems and those of its members."

These quotations clearly describe community work practice; however, the flavour is of an orientation towards preventive work with the kinds of client groups that social work has traditionally responded to on a one to one basis. In other words, whilst community workers may not have wished to perceive themselves as focussing their activity on the traditional client groups of social work, it is arguable that this assumption has always been at the heart of central government thinking as is also illustrated by the assumptions of the Seebohm[13] report that a

community orientation was required in areas 'characterised' by 'indices of social pathology'.

What emerged in Social Work Departments through the seventies varied widely in the degree to which community work was promoted. Where it was given scope for development, as in Strathclyde, it tended to remain marginal to mainstream social work which continued to emphasise casework as the basic practice method. However, an increasing emphasis in the theory of social work practice towards 'integrated' or 'unitary' methods'[14] encouraged some social work teams and workers to look again at the nature of the relationship between social services and the community. Though it involved the use of community work methods the approach which has become known as community social work was a catholic amalgam of different historical traditions in social work. It generally took a neighbourhood or 'patch' based approach. One of the most influential practitioners in its development in the late 70's, Mike Cooper,'[15] describing the philosophy of the approach said that:

> ".....experiences showed that there was great potential for community care in a lively partnership of the statutory, voluntary and informal sections of the communities. We developed a theory of community action which incorporated traditional social work values, notions of radical community work and the concept of voluntarism.... We wanted to act alongside clients and client groups as members of a community.... We felt it necessary to engage the community in a dialogue through which the mutual sharing of problems would both provide aid to individuals and clarify the political choices needed to produce a caring community."

By the time Patrick Jenkin, then Secretary of State for Social Services, requested the establishment of a working party by the National Institute for Social Work under the chairmanship of Peter Barclay'[16] in 1980, to review the state of social work, community social work was

already an established, if not a widespread, phenomena. The inclusion within the working party of Roger Hadley an established academic advocate of the approach was indicative of its attraction. Indeed it was the final report of the working party: 'Social Workers: Their Role and Tasks', which firmly placed the debate about community social work at the top of the agenda. In supporting this approach the Barclay report defined it in the following way:

> "By this we mean formal social work, which, starting from problems affecting an individual or group and the responsibilities and resources of social service departments and voluntary organisations, seeks to tap into, support, enable and underpin the local networks of formal and informal relationships which constitute our basic definition of community, and also the strengths of client's communities of interest.... The detailed activities in which community social workers engage may include an increased measure of activities of the kind carried out by community workers but they will continue to have statutory duties and other responsibilities to individuals, families or groups which do not fall within the remit of community workers."

The Barclay report clearly identified community work methods as central to their preferred approach to the development of social work, however, for community workers it represented a questionable approach to the use of community work. In particular the notion of partnership with the community in the provision of services could be interpreted either positively as empowering communities in meeting their own needs or negatively as a process of colonising the institutions of the community and harnessing them to the concerns of state welfare services. Equally the role of community workers was ambiguous, social workers appeared to be expected to use community work methods but community workers were excluded from social work roles. Whilst the latter might have been seen by many as a welcome exclusion, for those operating within social work

settings the report seemed to reinforce a sense of marginality whilst simultaneously acknowledging the importance of community work methods.

Subsequent to the Barclay report the debate about the nature of community social work has continued apace among both social workers and community workers. Among the latter, two articles by Alan York[17] and Hugh Butcher[18] have illustrated a significant divergence of views. York in attempting to provide a conceptual model for community social work has seen community work as belonging to a tripartite framework of social work theory setting it alongside case work and group work. Butcher on the other hand replying to York says:

> "Community work, it must be argued, is far broader than social work; indeed it is more helpful to see it as an approach to problem solving that, embodying certain definable principles and methods, can be utilised in a wide variety of substantive fields - including social work."

Herein lies the dilemma for community workers employed in Social Work Departments. In the face of the emergence of community social work do they opt to promote community work as part of an integrated model of social work practice or, whilst still recognising that it has a place in social work, do they attempt to sustain an identity which is not confined to social work concerns alone. The workers examined in this study clearly exhibit the widespread ambivalence that appears to exist in relation to this question. They are operating in a Social Work Department which has increasingly come to see community work as a method of social work. The restructuring of the department in 1986 is not a direct reflection of Barclay but it does owe much to the broad trend towards community social work ideas. The changes whilst, quite substantial, are evolutionary in character for it could reasonably be

argued that the heavy involvement of community workers within the department, since its inception in 1976, has always given it a community orientation even if the community workers appear unconvinced about the degree to which it has permeated the practice of the organisation.

Of relevance for this discussion is not the detail of the changed organisational structure but the principles on which it is based, for they contain parallels with many other local authorities. The approach extends the community orientation of the department but simultaneously integrates community work into the mainstream management and accountability structure of the agency. The policy documents on the restructuring of the department do not use the term community social work but the objectives and descriptions of practice reflect this orientation. For example:[19]

> "The new structure of the Social Work Department must aim to improve the quality of service to individuals, families and local communities by equipping area teams to respond quickly and appropriately to the needs in their areas... As far as possible, it must achieve consistency in the aims and methods adopted by the several aspects of the Department's services, in particular the residential, day care, domiciliary, fieldwork and community work services..."

Later, referring to the functions of management teams at District level, the policy document states:

> "The senior team will ensure that all services are informed by a community development perspective, that services are deployed appropriately on the basis of accurate information and that proper consultations take place with local communities and the recipients of social services."

Within this overall community development perspective, Area Managers are charged with ensuring that:

> "without loss of their professional identity, all fieldworkers in the team work to agreed objectives in ways which are consistent and mutually supportive."

These extracts from the restructuring document are entirely consistent with the trend already identified in the Director of Social Works' review of community work in 1984 when he stated of community work that:[20]

> ".....it is an important part of the Social Work Department and cannot stand apart from the other activities of the department.... As a guiding principle it is asserted that community work should move towards a close working relationship with the basic units of service delivery at the local level."

Despite all the frustrations expressed by the community workers about their relationships with the Social Work Department, in the period following the collection of the data on which this study is based, the integration of community work into a common line management structure with all other fieldwork services of the department has occurred. Its justification is on the basis of a philosophy which fits broadly the concept of community social work. It remains to be seen what the effects of these changes will be, but as Bennett[21] has commented:

> "The potential for a community development approach being adopted by a fieldwork team is rarely discussed. Even where community workers are employed they are often described as isolated from other workers in a team and in many cases their brief is set too wide for them to develop a local identity.... Many teams have experienced problems in integrating community work into the everyday life of a fieldwork team, and the search for common ground has not always been successful."

To be successful community workers have to operate in an agency whose values, objectives and methods are compatible with their own. However, the problem is not as simple as saying: is community social work compatible with community work? For just as the latter contians a variety of different objectives for, and approaches to, change so to

does the former. Indeed one of the most confusing aspects of the debate about community social work has been its capacity to generate enthusiasm from all points in the political spectrum. As Baldock[22] has said, referring to 'patch systems' of social work service organisations which have often been seen as a central feature of community social work approaches:

> "There is something at once impressive and confusing in the fact that an enthusiasm for patch systems is shared by people of such widely differing standpoints. It is not immediately clear why the same institutional reform should be advocated with equal fervour by a Conservative minister, such as Patrick Jenkin, a theorist of the political centre, such as Roger Hadley, and a grassroots socialist leader such as David Blunkett, leader of the Labour Group on Sheffield City Council."

Baldock's own conclusion is that it is a:

> "theoretically incoherent fad, a threat to much of the potential for good in the departments, a sentimental sugar coating over the monetarist pill of service cuts, Thatcherism with an almost human face."

Therapeutic as such rhetoric may be, the reality for many community workers, including those in Strathclyde, is that they have found themselves caught up in the development of the community social work trends and have to determine how they will operate in these new circumstances. The stances adopted by the Strathclyde workers and their feelings about their relationship with their employing department are liable, in my view, to produce frustration and tension which will not be resolved unless a compatible set of relationships with social work colleagues can be negotiated. Elsewhere I[23] have suggested a basis on which these relationships might be forged between the disciplines in an integrated community social work team and provide a basis for 'agreed

objectives' and ways of working which are 'consistent and mutually supportive'. In summary, some basic principles of practice have to inform the orientation of all the practice disciplines in the team.

Firstly, the way in which the team deploys its resources has to relate to an understanding of the problems and needs of the local community as it sees them. This involves adopting what Matza[24] calls 'an appreciative perspective': that is one which attempts to view the problems to be tackled from the standpoint of those who experience them rather than from preformed views of professional workers. Secondly, adopting the critical distinction offered by Wright-Mills,[25] it is necessary to recognise that the problems experienced within the community will represent both 'private troubles' and 'public issues'. In other words whilst some problems may reasonably be seen as arising from the personal characteristic of individuals and/or their immediate relationships with others, many can only be explained in terms of the institutional relationships between individuals and groups and wider social systems many, if not most, of which will not be peculiar to that locality. The team has therefore to function at both levels and to seek to understand the connections between them. It has to recognise the need to address both collective and individual experience. Thirdly, if change is to be responsive to community perceptions, however internally inconsistent they may prove to be, the workers need to be clear that their task, to employ Freirian[26] terms, is to 'liberate' the potential of the community and its individual members to develop their own problem solving skills. Their task is not simply to 'domesticate' community resources to fulfil their preformed goals for the development of social work services. Fourthly, the team has to recognise that ultimately its

task, working alongside the community and its different interest groups, is to create conditions which reduce the likelihood of crises arising and the constant need for reactive intervention. Crises will always occur but a community development orientation is by definition preventive in intent.

Principles such as those briefly outlined pose considerable problems for the state as sponsor and manager because they require the ceding of a high degree of authority to the community over its own affairs and the way in which team resources will be used. It would be naive to pretend that there could, or indeed should, be a total transfer of power but partnership cannot be based on token gestures and community workers cannot retain their own integrity if their promotion of community involvement ultimately turns out to be manipulation or a sham. Legitimately, the state, through the social work departments, has responsibility to protect people at risk and has to retain sanctions of social control but there is much room for developing approaches to those tasks which are experienced more positively by the community than is often the case. Similarly, the local authority remains the mechanism by which equitable distribution of resources between competing interests can be managed.

I am arguing then that despite the fears and frustrations expressed by the community workers examined in this study, the potential exists within the framework of the emergent community social work models for them to work in ways which are compatible with their objectives. Indeed if they woke up to the potential of the present situation they might discover that their marginality is a product of their perception of themselves rather than of the reality of the situation. What appears to

be lacking is an assertive self confidence about the contribution that community work should and, I would suggest in the Strathclyde context, could make. The lack of concerted attention to influencing change in their own organisation, illustrated both in the attitudes and practices of the workers studied, appears to be a major problem. The feeling is left that the workers see themselves as the victims of the power of their employer but have done little to actively influence organisational developments, and, even now whilst not denying that there will be considerable difficulties, are unable to recognise the potential that their situation presents. It is worth recalling the discussion of the Regional policies on community development in Chapter 2, for whilst they certainly contain some ambiguity, policy documents which refer to the promotion of:[27] 'strong collective organisation to press from below', are an invitation to community workers to promote the development of vibrant community influence. Similarly the move in the restructuring of the Social Work Department to require area teams to produce annual plans is an invitation to community workers to support the community in bringing its influence to bear on the directions which their local services take.

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## Chapter 15.

## Community work, social planning, other professions and elected members

Whilst the emergence of community social work and the role of community work within it has been presented as representing a tendency to seeing community work as a social work method, it is also true that the community social work approach, in acknowledging the centrality of 'social care planning', is one which more readily recognises the importance of collaborative relationships between welfare agencies operating in a given locality. The evidence about the quality and character of relationships between community workers and other professions is therefore an important area for debate when considering the role of community work both in the newly required social planning functions of area social work teams and on a broader corporate basis for particular neighbourhoods.

Similarly, in that in Strathclyde elected members have been actively involved in the formulation and evolution of the social strategy adopted by the Council (see Chapter 2), the nature of contacts between community workers and politicians deserves further attention.

As we have seen, particularly from the evidence of Chapter 6, the levels of systematic contact between the community work staff and staff of departments other than social work is quite limited. Corporate working is not highly valued except by the more senior workers and, as Chapter 5 indicates, it is not an extensive activity. This evidence presents a picture of community work staff as relatively isolated not

only in their own department but within the local authority more generally.

In a local authority with a single Council committee responsible for community development services in two major departments, the very low level of systematic collaboration between Community Education, and Social Work Department community workers should not pass without particular comment. Reasons can no doubt be produced by both sides, but an authority with an integrated policy process is clearly not producing integrated practice.

Generally the picture which has emerged from the evidence is that though the workers might be said to be characterised by a professional rather than a socialist orientation to community work, this does not imply high levels of interprofessional activity. Rather, the workers appear to focus on the local communities in which they work. Indeed the combination of this with the low level of commitment to social planning approaches (see Chapter 12) and the lack of attention to research, analysis and evaluation (see Chapter 5) presents an image of community workers in the Region reminiscent of the general view of British community work offered by Specht[1] in 1975. He states:

> "British community workers tend to put great value on becoming engaged with people and problems and getting into action as soon as possible. When I speak of the neglect of structure I refer to such things as systematic problem anlaysis, the identification of action or programme goals, the building of organisations and communication systems.... and skills for evaluation and review".

Whether the lack of engagement with organisational factors within the local authority and the isolation from other groups of workers is a product of a conscious practice philosophy is clearly open to question,

but it can be argued that it may reflect a certain arrogance on the part of community workers in terms of their capacity to promote change independent of other workers. Twelvetrees[2] has criticised community workers in these terms for their belief that: 'community work is the only way of getting done the things we want done'. He goes on to say:

> "This in turn makes us distrustful of people in admittedly equally marginal but probably no more ineffective positions who are in some cases as committed as we are, for example, politicians, chief officers, corporate planners. Too often we see the local authority as the 'enemy' and as a consequence do not exploit the expertise and commitment which sometimes exists."

Thomas[3] has taken these arguments further by specifically arguing for a much greater level of attention in community work to social planning approaches which would necessarily involve much higher and more systematic levels of contact between community workers and other professionals than the evidence of this study indicates to be common. In doing so however, he notes that:

> "community workers will be circumspect about technical skills and technologies that have largely been the monopoly of bureaucratic decision makers'.

Like Specht he recognises that if community workers are to engage more at the organisational and institutional level in relation to social policy they will need skills in:

> 'problem analysis and needs assessment, the choice of goals and priorities and the design, implementation and evaluation of programmes and interventions.'

Though these skills are considered important in community work training there is little indication of their practice among this group of workers, yet this may be regarded as a fruitful avenue for community work within Strathclyde given its anti-deprivation orientation.

It should be noted that elsewhere Thomas[4] makes the point in relation to social planning skills that:

> "to emphasise them to the exclusion of neighbourhood organising is unhelpful, not least because it ignores the developmental goals of community work".

The emergence from the restructuring of the social work department of a requirement for area teams to produce annual plans for their work provides a particular opportunity for community workers to develop social planning roles. In practice these skills require of community workers that they undertake systematic assessments of the needs of communities and the range of indigenous and external resources that may be relevant to the meeting of those needs. In any given locality there are a variety of sources of this understanding. The most significant is the community itself. However, acknowledging that communities contain many different interest groups the worker has to develop an appreciation of the community's perception of itself which takes account of the tensions between groups based on factors such as age, sex, employment status, location of residence, length of residence, relative 'respectability', race, housing tenure, political affiliation, religion, educational attainment, and so on. Such an understanding can only come from an intimate appreciation of the life styles, services and institutions of the local community. There is no substitute for direct involvement with the community and its affairs. However, this means that the community worker builds up a knowledge of local conditions not simply from the members of the local community but also from those agencies and workers who provide the services consumed by the community. The worker needs to understand not only how local people see their own

needs but equally how local schools, housing officials, primary health care workers, policemen, youth workers, DHSS officials, public health inspectors, planning officers or social workers perceive the community and respond to it. This understanding also requires a knowledge of how voluntary and private sector agencies and religious institutions operate in the area. Voluntary sector activity may be internal or external to the community, highly professionalised or quite ad hoc. Private sector activity involves understanding commercial life in the community, whether that be retailing, money lending and credit companies, manufacturing or service employment.

In short then the worker needs to establish a well informed view of the social, economic and political workings of the community. This information reflects not only the views of community members and agencies and businesses, operating in the area but is also a product of the interactions between them. There are a variety of ways of building up this knowledge. Impressions gathered from informal contacts can be set against more systematic and formal data sources. These include sources such as the census, records kept by public, voluntary and private sector agencies and direct investigative social research undertaken by workers in the local community.

There is little evidence from the diary recordings of the workers studied that they give much attention to the systematic collection of data or analysis of data already available from a variety of sources including their own department. Their actions, it is suggested, will therefore tend to be based on identification with particular interest groups in the community which have attracted their attention and to whose concerns they are positively disposed. Given limited resources,

these may not be the ones to which attention would be given if a more systematic assessment of needs and resources had been undertaken. I am not suggesting that the preferences of workers will not influence where energy is put but it is questionable on the basis of the evidence of the study whether workers are well enough informed to make choices. If this is true of their deployment of themselves, it is a much more worrying conclusion if they are to be involved in wider social planning functions for these involve consideration of the most appropriate ways of deploying public, voluntary and private sector welfare resources generally. To be credible in such a role community workers need to be able to demonstrate the soundness of their knowledge of the community and its services and be able to compare this with broader patterns of provision regionally and nationally.

Many community workers appear diffident about accepting this sort of role for it casts them in the mould of the expert. Rightly they are suspicious of the functioning of experts who are often seen, not without considerable justification in many cases, as out of touch with the experiences and feelings of service consumers. The question though, is not about expertise as such but about the way in which it is developed and used.

If community workers are to be engaged in social planning their approach to it has to be based in their broader principles of practice. The development of an expert knowledge about the community is not a basis for the capture of power to decide for people what is good for them but a basis for generating a well informed dialogue between interested parties over what should be regarded as most problematic and what should be done about it. In Marris[5] terms to operate in a context

of 'broadly shared ideals'. This, however, presumes a genuine commitment to influential participation by community interests and the existence of scope and willingness either to redeploy existing resources or to obtain new ones. Strathclyde would claim such an approach. However, the evidence of the research does not suggest that community workers are really testing its potential.

By concentrating on the resourcing of the community's own service initiatives and to a lesser extent, on campaigning work, it may be that community work is missing its potentially most influential role in drawing community organisations into the planning of the major public services which they consume. The capacity demonstrated by public service agencies to manipulate participation to sustain their own interests is a legitimate concern. So too is the pressure placed on workers in both supporting community groups and working within the decision making processes of the welfare bureaucracies - as one community activist put it to me: 'running with the hare and hunting with the hounds!' Being able to sustain dual loyalties of this kind requires openness and honesty not just on the part of the worker but equally on the part of the employer. The partnership with the community has to be genuine. It may be that commmunity workers have become so suspicious about conspiratorial motives of the state to employ them for purposes quite different from public policy statements about community involvement and participation, that their distrust has condemned them to a marginality which ill serves the people whom they claim to regard as of most importance - the disadvantaged.

These arguments are not presented to suggest that social planning should become the predominant function of community workers for the need

to promote a basic infrastructure of effective community organisations will remain a perpetual task as social, economic, political and demographic changes continually redefine the context of practice. I do not hold the view, often expressed by community workers, that as communities become organised the workers will work themselves out of a job. Nor do I wish to minimise the importance of the educational and personal development tasks involved in work with community groups. I am suggesting that in the circumstances offered by the policies of Strathclyde Region, it is unacceptable that community workers should have so little inclination to test out the opportunity to influence from below the policy planning of the local authorities. If the problem is that they lack the skill to do it, this requires urgent attention to training for community work.

In arguing this case I am suggesting that the liberal reformist approach to community work has potential which should be further explored. It is a pragmatic view of community work which looks for achievement of incremental change from within the current institutional framework of the local state. Whilst the socialist school may argue[6] that 'what is required is for tenants and residents to join in collective action with those in the labour movement active in the class struggle to bring the capitalist system to an end...', I would suggest that such pretention is absurdly misplaced and inappropriate to the scope offered by local authority based community work.

This is not to argue, however, that there is not considerable potential for radical alliances within state sponsored community work between community organisations, community workers, other profesional workers and local politicians, to promote redistributive policies.

It would no doubt strengthen the arguments for more use of community based social planning if the research had identified examples of this approach which could be used to indicate its potential. However, the evidence did not indicate any substantial attempts to work in this way from a fieldwork base. Whilst the time budget analysis of workers' activities, discussed in Chapter 5, showed some involvement, particularly for Community Development Organisers, in collection of material for Area Profiles of Areas for Priority Treatment, this was not an activity which appeared to have been positively regarded. The impression is that such activity was seen more as an administrative chore required by the employer than as a way of building up an appreciation of community needs which could inform community participation in the planning of services. Thus whilst as part of the overall Regional Social Strategy, Area Needs and Resources reports were being produced by the local authority, the workers, at the time of the study, did not appear inclined to use such data as a basis for dialogue with the community or as a basis for promotion of community participation in planning arising from these studies. Simultaneously officer-member Area Development Teams and Divisional Deprivation Groups were undertaking social planning tasks and might have been seen as an important target for community interests to influence.

It is not, therefore, the case that social planning has been absent, nor that community workers have not contributed to it but that they have not promoted community involvement as a key part of this process.

Community work and elected members

In arguing for greater attention to social planning roles and in seeing this as involving participative dialogue between the local authority and local community groups, it is important to recognise that this will involve community workers in more direct relationships with local elected members as well as with other professionals. Issues involved in relationships with politicians, particularly the complexities arising from the overlapping roles of community worker and councillor have already been considered in Chapter 9. The evidence reviewed in that chapter showed that, in the relationship between community workers and elected members, there is clearly suspicion about their motives in sponsoring community work. However, the low level of significant contact between the two groups, except perhaps for Community Development Organisers, requires exploration. The workers appear to doubt that elected members really understand community work either in terms of its objectives or its processes. Whether this is a valid judgement is unknown, but its existence colours the relationship that can exist between the two groups. Again, unless community workers are more willing to promote a dialogue about the problems of their work, it is difficult to see how elected members are expected to acquire their perceptions of community work in a systematic way. The relationship between workers supporting community groups which may be critical of Council policy and the local elected member who has participated in formulating that policy, is often a difficult one. It is nonetheless crucial that their different roles, and the legitimacy of them, is mutually understood. More direct communication between elected members and community work staff seems desirable to this end.

The importance of the promotion of the relationship with politicians has been emphasised by Young[7] who, as an elected member centrally involved in the promotion of community work and anti deprivation policy in Strathclyde, has said:

> ".... many community workers have fallen into the familiar trap of assuming that people called politicians possess political skills. At the local level the only skills which the experience of local government develops well are those of survival - not of social change".

He goes on to argue that community workers need to work with politicians to develop strategic and organisational skills suggesting that:

> "Many community workers are indeed self indulgent in choosing to work with community groups.... rather than the more challenging environment of politics and other professions.'

How extensively other politicians would acknowlege such deficiencies may be one of the dilemmas which inhibits community workers in their engagement with elected members, but the area deserves more attention. If Specht[8] is right about that 'neglect of structure, a parallel set of deficiencies in community workers may inhibit this process of politicising elected members. Undertaken without the necessary skills and insight the process may become counter-productive in that it may simply promote political action in relation to sectional interests and damage the capacity of local government to act equitably between different local interests. As Corina[9] has said:

> "what might be counter productive is the type of politicisation which triggers off sectional pressures, compelling a response from an authority which actually reduces the chances of meeting the needs of the most deprived. What is not needed, in other words, is pressure which reverses the efforts to effect redistributive measures."

Given the essentially local neighbourhood orientation of the Strathclyde workers their lack of systematic analysis of community need and their view of the parochialism of the community groups, this is potentially a very real problem.

To facilitate more effective relationships with the elected members it is necessary for community workers to develop a relatively sophisticated understanding of the complexity of politicians' roles and their relationships with the local government officer system. In an authority such as Strathclyde, where relationships between the community and both officers and politicians are often mediated through participation structures, this is particularly important. As Smith[10] has argued:

> "... local authorities are not structureless monoliths. Councillors and officers each have different views and roles, operate within a complex framework and have a limited accountability to their electorate. The interaction of these different factors will probably mean that the attitudes to participation will vary from committee to committee and department to department in the same local authorities. These inconsistencies will create frustration in each area but they also provide an opportunity for exploitation by the local community."

Whilst Smith makes an important point about the inconsistancies of councillors' attitudes there is nonetheless a danger in viewing participation opportunities as an opening to 'exploit', for, in my experience, elected members have a very strong sense of their representative authority and are liable to close ranks if threatened by vociferous demands of community organisations. It is important therefore to consider carefully the need to sustain relationships with elected members which engage them in the concerns of community organisations before they arise in crucial forums for decision making. In other words,

it may be necessary, to a degree, to pander to the prevailing belief of many elected members in a representative democratic process and to engage them as early as possible in a dialogue about controversial community proposals. Such proposals are much more likely to be carefully considered and supported if they emanate from organisations in the community which have established their credibility as having a history of serving community interests and being able to demonstrate popular support. As Darke and Walker[11] have suggested in reviewing councillors' attitudes to participation procedures in South Yorkshire:

> ".....councillors are extremely concerned about legitimate representation. Opinions backed by substantial and politically acceptable support have greater authority and political impact. If views are presented in an acceptable package of moderation which encloses constructive proposals, the principle of representative democracy is not threatened. However, the disruptive or radical proposal may also carry further implied threats, namely to operating ideologies and principles as well as to the oiled and established procedures of local government and administration."

This of course presents a problem for unpopular minority groups. It may be a particularly important reason why community workers should be giving more time to the promotion of working relationships with elected members than the research evidence indicates. Similarly, it reinforces the need to engage elected members in more radical proposals at the earliest possible stage to try to engender a sense of shared ownership of the ideas involved. However, it is important to be alert to Corina's[12] concern that local pressures should not distort wider territorial justice. Community workers may be able to guard against this by developing the detailed understanding of the community in which they work, as suggested in the discussion of social planning roles and placing it in the wider context of the local authority as a whole. A

product of this may also be to alert them to possible alliances with common interests in other areas. This in turn may have the benefit of building a constituency of popular support which will be more readily acceptable to the politician.

In taking this wider view the community worker is clearly acting as a political broker between community interests and as such is liable to experience some tension with formal elected representatives. Such tensions can only be resolved if the legitimacy of this role is understood within the context of the community work policy of the Regional Council. It provides yet another example of why greater promotion of direct relationships with councillors is potentially problematic.

Before leaving the question of the relationship between community workers and elected members, two further related issues, specific to Strathclyde should be noted. The first is that a significant part of the development of local government practice in the Region since its inception has been a much closer relationship between officers and members than is common in the formulation and review of policy. In particular, the Region has instituted a system of Officer/Member Groups to review and formulate policy for key strategic areas relevant to its anti-deprivation programme. Many of these have focussed on traditional social work client groups such as ex-offenders, mentally handicapped or addicts, but more recently have taken a more universalist approach for example in reviewing pre-fives services, compulsory education and youth services.

This increasing desire on the part of members to be more centrally involved in the policy process increases the importance of community

workers ensuring that they both assist community organisations to effectively represent themselves to councillors and directly foster relationships through which members may sustain an understanding of how policy is experienced at the local level. In Strathclyde Region members are well supplied with statistical data on needs and resources in different neighbourhoods through policy planners in the Chief Executives' Department, the particular task of the community workers may be to assist the members to interpret such data in the light of the experiences of local people. To do this effectively a close relationship has to be maintained.

The second specifically local factor concerning the links between community workers and elected members arises from the objectives of the restructuring of the Social Work Department,[13] which states:

> "It must reinforce the links between Elected Representatives and the social services within their electoral areas."

For community workers now deployed in area teams, a formal expectation of relationships to elected members has been indicated as a part of the normal practice of area teams. This is consistant with the position adopted by the Director of Social Work in his review of community work[14] (discussed in Chapter 9) when he argues that the:'roles of community worker and local member are mutually supportive'.

Since the purpose of improved relationships between members and community workers is to benefit community organisations and the people they represent, it is important to see these relationships in the context of the kind of contacts that the workers have with the local community. This is the subject of the next chapter.

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# Chapter 16

## Community work and community groups and activists

The nature of the relationship between community workers and community groups, as perceived by workers in Strathclyde Regional Social Work Department, has already been reviewed in Chapter 10. It was suggested then that the influence of the perception of community groups of the nature of their problems and the potential for change is a crucial determinant of how workers spend their time. The evidence suggests that workers have come to see the groups as trapped in parochial self interest, competing for the time and attention of the workers and hence for a share of available resources. In this sense the groups may be seen as competing with one another for attention with the result that rather than addressing wider problems of social inequality they simply alter the balance of opportunity between disadvantaged groups. In discussing community workers' relationships with politicians, the danger that their involvement with community groups vociferously asserting their local concerns, may actually be counter-productive to just redistributive policies has already been noted. The problem is exacerbated by the degree to which the process of community work may be in conflict with its objectives.

### The process and goals of working with community groups

It has long been a tenet of faith in community work that change processes in the community start with small scale local problems and move outwards to broader understandings of need which place local

experience in the context of an analysis of social inequality. Thus it is hoped that local groups will come to appreciate their position in terms of socio-economic class status, race, gender and so on. This is not to deny that there will be particular local characteristics to manifestations of more generally experienced disadvantages, but it is to indicate that the educational task of community work is regarded by many workers as not only to develop skills for acting on problems but also to develop understanding of the causes of those problems and of the need to link local campaigns to broader social and political movements. From this standpoint community work cannot be separated from broader political processes which link it to party political, trade union and pressure group politics.

In an authority such as Strathclyde the investment in community work is in any case a part of an anti-deprivation strategy promoted by the ruling Labour group. Local experience should therefore be seen as serving a wider political strategy. Clearly the degree of trust that community workers place in that strategy varies considerably as the evidence of this study indicates. Similarly, as Chapter 13 suggests, the attitudes of workers to the state as a potential agent of change for the disadvantaged also varies substantially. Indeed, not all community workers actually see issues of social and economic inequality as being central to community work. Nonetheless, a substantial proportion, including many of those interviewed for this study, clearly do. Since this is so, it is important to consider why the parochial tendency is so prevalent in the practice and outlook of these workers. It is here that the problems of the process and methods of community work come into play.

Whilst workers may aspire to influence broader issues, the motivation of local people to become active in their locality usually relates to problems which are experienced by their neighbours and themselves in immediate ways. The damp council house, for example, may illustrate problems in the level of public sector investment in housing nationally but, for the family which experiences it, the dampness is a problem in relation to high fuel bills, ill health, lack of adequate space, damaged furnishings, pressures on personal relationships and so on. What motivates action is the desire to remove the immediate personal problem; what motivates collective action is the fact that many personal interests are shared in common. For that motivation to be carried into action there has to be a belief in the potential for resolution of the problem. Even if the state of national public investment in housing is recognised as central to inequalities in housing provision, it is not likely to be seen as susceptible to change from local action. What is much more likely is that there will be local knowledge of cases where the local councillor and/or housing officials have responded to pressure from individuals or groups of people complaining about damp houses. In other words, improving your competitiveness relative to other individuals and groups is known to have produced success. It is rational self-interest, it is suggested, which draws people into community organisations to tackle local problems. While they may recognise a wider aggregate interest at city wide or even national level, neighbourhood residents quite rationally assess the potential for change on the evidence that is available that local pressure in redirecting existing resources is easier to achieve than an overall increase. Whilst such a competitive stance may not

match the objectives of many community workers, community groups may have a more pragmatic view. As O'Brien[1] puts it:

> "There has been much confusion about the organisation of the poor because we have often failed to realise that service delivery systems often provide a potential basis for conflict between poor neighbourhoods."

O'Brien has also explored the problem of motivation of participation in community organisations among disadvantaged people and suggested that altruism is not a significant factor. Rather, it is, as I have argued, mutual self interest and the recognition that participation is likely to achieve a pay-off which would not otherwise be achieved which is central. He argues:

> "Pluralist interest group theory assumes that rational individuals will support a collective effort if they will individually benefit from that effort; however, if the benefits are available to everyone, whether or not they make a contribution, what incentive is there for a rational self-interested individual to voluntarily contribute to the costs of those efforts?"

From this position he goes on to argue that it may be necessary for community organisers to apply sanctions to ensure that benefits accrue only to those who participate. Such an approach was adopted in the Gorbals Anti-dampness Campaign. Bryant and Bryant[2] quote one of the workers as saying:

> "... the campaign exercised control by threatening to withdraw from non-participants the individual services which were organised by the campaign."

Such a position is controversial for in effect it argues that those who act on their own self interest are more deserving than those who do not, even though they share the same problem. Indeed, it legitimises partiality on the part of workers on the basis of the level of

commitment and energy of participants. Many workers will resist this approach on ethical grounds but know too that the effectiveness of the community organisation may be intimately related to the rewards that participants achieve. The workers face a dilemma, for their own aspirations for wider redistributive justice are not only not compatible with the motivations of community activists but are also of concern because little evidence of effectiveness in their achievement through community work methods is so far available.

Community workers and community groups in Strathclyde - the role of social planning

In that the evidence of this study indicates a high degree of parochialism among community groups as they are perceived by community workers it may reflect a real tension between aspirations and methods of practice. I remain concerned, however, that community workers may have succumbed too much to the local self interests of community organisations. If they were to adopt wider social planning functions, as earlier suggested, they would be required to assess the impact of local initiatives in relation to the justice of wider social policy. Ethical dilemmas about the promotion of some community interests rather than others would have to be more openly faced. Indeed, workers might have to recognise that their energies should be directed to supporting particular kinds of initiative on the basis of strategic social policy objectives defined by their employers. This is precisely the direction in which community work policy in Strathclyde Region appears to have been moving. The Regional Council policy statement 'Social Strategy for the Eighties'[1] states:

> "...Strathclyde Region is not in the business of crash programmes and hopeful rhetoric - but rather a long term process of transforming the way people think about themselves and what they are capable of and of reshaping our methods of implementation accordingly....The action required was of different sorts and we have chosen in the first phase from 1976/7 to 1982/3 to concentrate on
>
> (a) the encouragement of local initiatives and action
>
> (b) generating greater understanding of these problems (i.e. multiple deprivation) in public agencies and commitment to move against them in appropriate ways.
>
> We feel this was realistic and correct...Confidence has developed. Citizens are more confident of their skills, contributions and power and we are more confident about the activities which have most relevance to the people in these areas. We are now ready to move into a new phase....This phase attempts to strike a better balance between local action and central guidance: it is more detailed in its expectations of specific services but will continue to require negotiations of appropriate local development."

This extract illustrates the increasing tendency to harness local government services including community work to the strategic priorities of the Region. This trend is also illustrated by the move in the Social Work Department to annually reviewed strategic plans for the deployment of area team staff, including community workers. The impact is potentially to increase the degree of tension which the community workers experience with the interests of local community groups who are likely increasingly to gain support on the basis of the congruence between their own objectives and the strategic priorities of the Regional Council. This may become difficult for community workers at the point at which local people lack motivation to action because they perceive little chance of fulfilling their own objectives. Whether community workers feel comfortable in this role will depend on the degree to which they share Regional objectives, believe them to have

been developed on an appreciative understanding of community needs, and trust the capacity and motivation of the Regions' elected members and employees to genuinely seek their achievement. From the evidence of this research this may present some problems. However, again it is compatible with Marris[4] notions of operating within a shared framework of ideals common to the state, the workers and the local community.

Having acknowledged the trend to a more directed form of community work it would be wrong to assume that workers will not be able to influence priorities through local strategic planning processes or more significantly by the power which accrues from a sound knowledge base of a particular locality and its aspirations. In addition, more attention to analysis of community needs and appropriate responses would enhance their credibility.

There will be important choices to be made in terms of action priorities. In order to link the strategic understanding with local motivation it may be necessary to move away from the current parochial orientation and attempt to link common community interests. If this is not done, the stoking-up of local demands may force the local authority to respond to competing demands which run counter to equitable services. The local authority is recognising that market pluralism is not a basis for just social policy reponses and has to avoid reinforcing its own difficulties as a result of allowing its workers to perpetuate pluralist myths. On the basis of the evidence of this study, the workers seem inclined to do so as a result of a pragmatic reactiveness to the demands placed on them by community groups.

Federal campaigns and inter-organisational community work

The study has provided little evidence of the promotion of collaboration between community groups in relation to issues of common concern. Where they are reported, federal groups appear most often to relate to particular localities and not to common disadvantages which can be addressed at a wider level. If such groups were being promoted a much more extensive role for systematic investigative work in relation to needs and related policies might emerge. The Regional Council itself campaigns on national political issues which are of major relevance to local community groups, but the links which could draw them into participation in wider arguments do not seem to feature as a major source of attention for community work staff. If workers were more open about the wider purposes of community work many of which are actually enunciated in Regional policy statements some of the limitations of parochialism might be challenged.

To propose a greater degree of attention to inter group work is not however to deny the difficulties that are often encountered in sustaining such an approach. There is no point in promoting such development unless it addresses real problems in an effective manner. Here, the advice offered by Clarke[5] may be helpful. He states:

> "My hypothesis is that federations of community groups are serviceable where the target of the joint action is properly defined as local, and has the capability of constructive response to the challenges that community groups wish to present."

Inter group action then still requires specificity of purpose and, though it may transcend particular neighbourhoods, to produce tangible results for participants and to operate (after Runciman)[6] within

a scale of reference with which the participants can identify. Not all issues meet these specifications however, which may be another justification for greater attention on the part of community workers to the development of social planning skills and linkages to pressure groups, trade union and party political activity. Generally though, the extensiveness of involvement of workers in areas such as housing allocations, repairs, management or improvement, employment, poverty and welfare rights draws attention to approaches to social change which recognise the relationships between the problems as experienced in different neighbourhoods. These local manifestations cannot logically be treated as the isolated problems of particular localities. Indeed the lack of attention to this approach is surprising given the existence in the Regional Council of a corporate anti-deprivation policy which could be valuably informed by aggregation of evidence from different localities. This is not to pretend that it will produce simple solutions to the local problems for it has been recognised that many of these 'arise out of the socio-economic situation which has arisen in the West of Scotland since the 1950's.'[7] The evidence may, however, enhance the possibility of the more fundamental structural changes which are required to address the needs of disadvantaged communities. To remain locally focussed and parochial in orientation is to risk failing to recognise 'the flaw in the pluralist heaven' and to presume as Benington[8] has put it that: 'the problems arise from imbalances in the democratic and bureaucratic systems', when in fact they may be more reasonably explained in terms of 'fundamental conflict of interests between groups and classes in society'.

I do not wish to overstate these arguments for I do not make the presumption that all community problems should be explained in terms of structural disadvantages or that significant ameliorations of a variety of social problems cannot be achieved within localities employing the latent talents and skills of local people. Such initiatives as local services for children, young or elderly people are potentially of great value not least in terms of the benefit that the providers gain in self confidence and self esteem. However, given that community work in Strathclyde Region is a central facet of an explicit anti-deprivation strategy, it is important to measure its overall contribution on the basis of its capacity to improve more equitable distribution of resources to deprived areas to compensate for the effects of those disadvantages.

The adoption of this approach, is, as I have suggested, compatible with the broad thrust of Regional policy, however, there is a potential tension between it and the emergence of a closer associaiton between community workers and area social work teams. As was suggested earlier this change has met with some resistance from community workers who fear that their activities will be focussed more on the traditional client groups of social work and on more servicing than campaigning styles of work. It also has the effect of tying community workers to a particular geographical location which may inhibit development of strategic issue work. This is not entirely new for at the time of the study most Community Workers and Community Work Assistants were neighbourhood based. However, the Community Development Organisers and Senior Community Workers were able to operate across districts and were jointly involved on a region wide basis in collective work with the Regional

Community Development Organiser. This last post as well as the post of Community Development Organiser has ceased to exist and Community Workers and Assistants have been made accountable through Seniors to the Area Managers. As a result there is no overarching mechanism between community workers for the development of strategic issue work. If the negative impact of a parochial style of community work is to be avoided it will be important to ensure that the new structure does not stifle the development of links between community workers and community groups across the organisational boundaries of their employing department. This is a real danger if the move to a community social work approach limits community workers to a service development approach to 'at risk' groups in particular localities. I do not believe this should, or needs, to be the case.

Community groups - dependence or independence?

Whilst the parochialism of community work practice may be a predominant feature of the evidence of the study, other aspects of the relationships between community workers and community groups deserve consideration. One which is related to the above issues concerns the potential which groups have to become independent of community worker support. Given the nature of the study which only examined the practice of community work at a particular point in time, it is not possible from the evidence to assess accurately the degree to which the groups with which the workers are operating are emerging as self-sustaining organisations. Inferences can, however, be drawn from the kinds of comments that workers make about the groups. Their predominant comment is that groups wish to achieve a resolution to the specific problem that

has brought them into being. This suggests that groups are focussed on a single issue or problem and that the membership is motivated only by that specific difficulty. This can result in distinctly different kinds of group concerned either with provision of a service or campaigning for changes in policy and/or practice by other agencies. As Chapter 5 indicated the content of work with the community by these workers is primarily oriented to services rather than issue based work. As Chapter 10 indicated, though the workers identified the groups as having an expectation that workers would adopt a variety of roles with them, predominantly the terms used suggest a significant dependence on the workers by the groups. Terms like: enabler, organiser, advocate, fixer, resource provider and stirer all suggest the worker is a key figure in the relationships between groups and those whom they wish to influence. Though workers express the aspiration that community groups will become independent of them, the indications are that this is not happening extensively. Certainly many of the service providing groups appear to have quite a long history and high degree of stability but the emphasis of the workers' activities on providing resources to support them suggests that considerable time is spent in sustaining their activities. The issue focussed campaigning work is not only less prevalent, but combined with the low level of development of inter-group activities, it appears not to be developing the self sustaining movement of community organisations from poor areas to which many workers aspire.

The common assertion, then, that community work produces a self sustaining process of learning from action which is transferred by participants to the resolution of new situations and problems is highly questionable. It suggests that if workers operate from a local

neighbourhood base there will be great difficulty in developing activities which focus on more than specific local concerns or make connections between the common experiences and problems of people in different neighbourhoods. The workers themselves, as indicated in Chapter 7, identify with the aspiration that the process of work will: 'increase the confidence, self esteem, independence, knowledge and skill of local community members'. However, if their work is also to contribute to the broader aims of affecting a general shift in the relative position of disadvantaged groups they will need to raise their sights beyond the specific localities in which they work and begin to more effectively use the evidence of local circumstances to contribute to the wider strategy promoted by the Regional Council. If that cannot be achieved in tandem with community activists through more broadly based federal campaigns of local community organisations then community workers may need to review their commonly held belief that change should only be promoted through community organisations.

Such a view may well be resisted by many of the workers studied here for they appear, from the evidence of Chapter 7, to place emphasis on classical community development theory which is heavily influenced by the values of non-directiveness. As Chapter 11 indicates they regard the nature of the problems in the area and the attitudes and abilities of community members as the two most influential factors in relation to the character and style of their work. Whilst their own values and ideology are ranked in third place, the overall impression is that the workers see themselves primarily as servants of the aspirations of local community interests. Hence their use of terms like enabler, advocate and resource provider to describe their roles with community groups.

The application of community work methods to a strategy to combat deprivation may require that workers place less emphasis on local community definitions of their problems and more emphasis on identifying the points at which local aspirations coincide with strategic objectives. In so doing they will be operating from a much more directive stance and deriving authority for their selectivity between different community interests from the broader analysis of deprivation and the strategic objectives of their employer. This approach is clearly associating the practice of community workers with the objectives of the Regional Council and using its analysis of the problems as a basis for producing a rationale for consistent forms of intervention by community workers. For many community workers this may be viewed as heresy, however, it can be argued that the ad hoc approach to community work which produces widely variable kinds of practice reflecting the dispositions of individual workers is potentially counter-productive. Community workers may need to more readily acknowledge the political authority of their employers to set guidelines for their practice. I am not suggesting that workers (or groups) should accept these uncritically but, if they want their practice to contribute to an overall attack on deprivation, they have to take an overview of the problems and appreciate that community work is only one facet of the response.

This approach is clearly only appropriate in a situation where there is a genuine commitment in policy and practice by the local authority to the interests of disadvantaged people based on the provision of means by which these groups can effectively articulate their concerns. Thus while it may be possible to justify this argument for community work in

Strathclyde it is certainly not a universal proposition for community workers in the United Kingdom as a whole.

Community workers and community activists

In a discussion of the relationships between community workers and community groups one further area deserves some attention. It is apparent both from the small number of activists with whom most workers have contact in particular communities and the regularity with which they have contact with them (see Chapter 6) that in many neighbourhoods there is a hard core of people who are extensively active in relation to community problems. Most of the Community Work Assistants were recruited from this source and the impression of a high level of voluntary involvement is reinforced by the evidence in Chapter 4 of the voluntary activity undertaken by Community Work Assistants prior to their employment by the Regional Council. Many were already contributing equivalent levels of time to community activity to that which might be undertaken by a part-time worker. Like the group with which they are concerned the interests of these activists are generally highly localised, nonetheless, there is a blurred distinction between the roles of many activists and those of community work staff, most notably Community Work Assistants.

Unfortunately there is no direct evidence from the research on how these activists view the relationship. My own experience of community work in Strathclyde does, however, indicate some resentment that some local people have found relatively secure paid employment to engage in work apparently not dissimilar to that undertaken by community activists. It is also the case that Community Work Assistants often

find it difficult to make the transition from volunteer activist accountable only to other members of the community to community worker accountable to the local authority.

The relationship between voluntary and paid workers who share in the same tasks is not one which raises dilemmas only in community work. In general the degree of tension which the relationship creates appears to be a function of the degree of distinctive difference in role particularly in terms of use of developed knowledge and skills. Thus, where it is apparent that the paid worker makes a contribution which cannot be provided on a voluntary basis, fewer difficulties are encountered. Specialist knowledge or skills may be particularly significant but so too is capacity to provide a more reliable service. In the case of the Community Work Assistants it is this increased reliability and availability which, at least initially, is likely to be the most significant factor distinguishing them from voluntary activists.

The anxiety expressed by Community Work Assistants about lack of training may be evidence of a desire to develop other ways of distinguishing themselves from community activists by acquiring increased knowledge and skill. Though there are also many more positive motives, herein lies an irony, for the means of creating a more distinct role involves the acquisition of more developed and extensive knowledge and skills, yet community work aspires to transfer skills and knowledge to community groups and agencies themselves.

There has been considerable pressure on the Regional Council by Community Work Assistants for training opportunities both in general educational terms and in relation specifically to community work.

Through day release and in-service, modular courses several Community Work Assistants have gone on to full time professional training and become qualified. Professional advancement and career development should not be derided, but it is important to recognise that there are many activists who could benefit from the same opportunities and wish to do so.

Concern with this issue was a key motivating factor in a project promoted by Ruskin College and the William Temple Foundation which drew together ativists from a range of community organisations in Oxford, Manchester and Liverpool in a training and support programme. It is well worth noting the reported views of these activists.[9]

> "Many participants in the programme felt that they had not received real support from institutional resource holders and that often those involved in local communities or professionals were not concerned to pass on skills and knowledge or to help people "learn to learn". This was particularly true in some situations where local people had faced a succession of "raw recruits", academically well qualified but practically inexperienced. Local leaders often spent much of their time inducting such people only to have them move on to "higher" things after a short stay."

The evidence of this research (see Chapter 5) does not indicate significant or systematic activity by these workers to promote structural opportunities for activists to become involved in training or personal development programmes. I am aware of some good examples in Strathclyde though generally through specialist training agencies, but the research suggests that this is not a wide spread activity which forms a part of normal community work. This is not to suggest that community workers do not see their work as performing educational functions for, as Chapters 7 and 12 in particular indicate, they do see

this as significant but appear to view learning as arising from the process of action rather than also being offered in more formal ways.

So far I have concentrated discussion on relationships between activists and Community Work Assistants, but the issues of distinctiveness of role are also relevant to the other community work staff in that they appear to tie themselves very closely to the local aspirations of the community groups. I have already argued that workers should take a broader view, developing action on strategic concerns which reflect a more sophisticated analysis of social needs and priorities. This approach would create a clearer distinction between local activists and employed workers. Workers would retain support to community organisations but priorities for their activity would be based in the wider objectives of a social strategy directed towards greater social justice.

Whether this is more deserving of payment than the efforts of community activists in their own areas may still be controversial. Within current predominant social values it will no doubt be argued that community work, as with any other occupation, can only justify itself as a paid activity if it can offer specialist knowledge and skills for which there is a market. Such a value system about the relationship between work and reward should be questioned particularly if the view is taken that the British economy has reached a post-industrial state. In other words, if the economy no longer operates with the possibility of creating, or the need for, full employment, and communities have substantial proportions of able people no longer in work, should we not reassess the contribution of voluntary work to community well being and give it monetary value? This may sound utopian but in an increasingly

unequal society which produces massive social needs and problems in disadvantaged areas, there is a real danger that community care activities in particular are being developed through community workers on the basis of an assumption of the availability of voluntary labour. Resources in terms of buildings, equipment and organisers are being provided by the state but the services are offered by volunteers whose only reward is personal fulfilment or relief from the stresses of unemployment. We are becoming a society where those in secure well paid employment, or of independent means, are increasingly encouraged to buy their social services in the private market whilst the unemployed and low paid are increasingly left to rely on under resourced public services which they are encouraged to supplement by their own efforts.

If community work is genuinely concerned with injustice, more attention should perhaps be given to the contradictions between its own professional aspirations and the roles in which it is engaging others to work on a voluntary basis. If equal pay for equal work is a principle of equal opportunities legislation, and trade union struggles, where do unemployed, voluntary community activists stand?

Interestingly the promotion of the Regional Social Strategy sees the development of community initiatives as a means of empowerment of communities in relation to their own needs. This is related to a philosophy of positive discrimination which has seen a shift in the balance of local authority welfare resources to the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods. Yet in some respects the product in terms of community self-help, though described in different language, might be applauded by welfare minimalists of the New Right whose arguments Brenton[10] suggests are:

> "motivated by the desire to restrict government responsibility and cut welfare spending....."

She goes on:

> "They are directed towards a substitution which offers substantial cost advantages, and are, therefore, only realisable in terms of volunteer rather than paid labour, and unpaid, informal care by women rather than collectively organised services. They envisaged the return of responsibility for 'self-help' to individuals and communities, and imply the possibility of a radical dismantling of the personal social services through a gradual process of resource starvation."

Strathclye Regional Council[11] is clearly committed in its policy to:

> "improve services for the most needy even if central government cutbacks mean that this requires directing resources from elsewhere."

Later, the 'Social Strategy for the Eighties' document states in relation to evaluation of the strategy:

> "We would therefore apply two tests to the last six years: the take-up of services and community action."

Whilst the first of these criterion would clearly not meet the requirements of welfare minimalists, the latter, in that this research shows it to be extensively focussed on local self-help services provided through voluntary labour, would be positively viewed. Inadvertently the conditions may be being created in which, if there continues to be cutback in public sector welfare spending, there will be a more adequate community based welfare infrastructure which could be used to justify a more residual form of state welfare provision. This has to be guarded against. The issues need to be openly faced with community groups and activists. The argument that there should be:[12] "more opportunities for citizens to work voluntarily in education, health, and social services, as an expression of fraternity and the rights and obligations of

citizenship" may have validity in a situation where such action is based on free choice it does not hold when the burden of caring is deliberately thrust back on self-help. The latter is the logic of recent government thinking. To quote Patrick Jenkin[13] when Secretary of State for Social Services in 1981:

> "The responsibility of the statutory services, in partnership with voluntary organisations, is to provide the essential back-up, expertise and support, the framework within which services using all the resources of the community can be planned, and any essential services that cannot be provided by the community."

and:

> "The social services departments should seek to meet directly only those needs which others cannot or will not meet.... There task is to act as a safety net, the final protection for people for whom there is no other, not as a first port of call."

Or, as the current Minister[14] has said:

> "We have a different vision of what it means to 'protect and promote economic and social welfare' in this country. We believe that dependence in the long run decreases human freedom. We believe the well being of individuals is protected and promoted when they are helped to be independent, to use their talents to take care of themselves and their families and to achieve things on their own.....
>
> Therefore the next step forward in the long evolutionary march of the welfare state in Britain is away from dependence toward independence.
>
> This is, I submit, the principle which should guide the formation of social policy into the next century."

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## Chapter 17

## Knowledge, skills, training and professional identity

At a variety of points in the discussion of the implications of the findings for community work practice, reference has been made to the deficiencies of training for community work. It would be unreasonable to hold trainers responsible for all the weaknesses of practice, for performance as in any other field is related to the qualities of individual workers and their motivation and capacity to use the opportunities which arise in their work setting. It is probably the case, however, that training could be much more effective in its preparation of workers for the complex tasks which effective community work is likely to involve. It is worth reviewing some of the training issues which have been noted and considering responses which might be made.

Perhaps the most recurrent theme of the discussion has been the absence in the practice of many community work staff of a sense of a sophisticated theoretical analysis of the purposes and effectiveness of their practice. The concentration on highly local concerns, the high proportion of the unplanned work and the emphasis on reactive responses to expressed needs, rather than on systematic analysis of the nature of community problems, has raised concern about whether practice is really addressing the most significant problems or tackling them in the most appropriate ways. The lack of evidence of strategically planned intervention is of concern as a reflection of the low status accorded to social planning as a component of community work.

The study has clearly indicated the very complex nature of the organisational relationships involved in community work. Workers at the time of the study operated from a range of different organisational settings and though this has been rationalised with the restructuring of the Social Work Department, the role is still complex. Firstly community workers have to relate to the accountability structure and objectives of their own employing department. Secondly, they have to relate to the broader objectives of the Regions' overall social strategy which potentially brings them into significant contact both with elected members and with the staff of other departments. Thirdly, they have to manage the potential tensions between their loyalties to their employer and the community organisations with which they work. Fourthly, their employing organisation may be regarded both as a target which workers may seek to change but as also having managerial authority in relation to the style and content of the work that they undertake. Fifthly, many of those with managerial authority over them lack training or detailed knowledge of community work. Sixthly, the majority of the community work staff are themselves either untrained Community Work Assistants or workers whose training has not been undertaken in the social work field in which they are now employed. Seventhly, the priorities of social work, whilst increasingly employing the language and concepts of community work, are heavily influenced by statutory duties defined by central government.

All of these factors demand that the workers have sophisticated skills. Not only are there potentially competing demands upon them but they operate in a setting in which many of those with power over them do not necessarily understand the nature of community work. Yet one of the

concerns which has emerged from the study is a lack of attention to explaining and negotiating their role as community workers. Whether this results from a lack of communication skills is not clear but the limited attention given to reflection, analysis and evaluation of either their own practice or the wider functioning of community work as part of the social strategy does not raise confidence about their capacity to reduce the apparent marginality felt by community workers in their department.

The idiocyncracies of the ways in which the workers operate and their differing outlooks on practice makes it difficult to identify a profile of the knowledge and skills which they require. The promotion of a local volunteer run luncheon club for the elderly, for example, requires a different cluster of skills from the promotion of a community business and is in turn different from the skills required, for example, in supporting a community action campaign to prevent the closure of a local health centre. Some workers may become involved in all three types of activity (and possibly many others) whilst others may focus on just one. Some of the required skills will be common to all the activities, some will not. It becomes apparent therefore that any programme of training has to specify the types and range of work to which it relates. This may seem self-evident but the variability of practice presents considerable problems for trainers in focussing on appropriate skills and knowledge. Indeed trainers are faced with the problem of whether they should relate to practice as it is undertaken, as specific local policies indicate it should be undertaken or as it might alternatively be undertaken.

A further set of problems when considering training needs relates to the lack of clear explanations for why the practice of community work takes the pattern that it does. For example, it is difficult to know whether the generally localised focus of work is a product of positive choice, organisational pressures and constraints or lack of confidence, knowledge or skills to work in other ways. The explanation presented by respondents to this research appears to be that it reflects the wishes of the community groups. However, the tendency could be interpreted as a projection by the workers about the aspirations of the community groups as a defence against the complex challenges of inter-neighbourhood or social planning work. Similarly, whilst not denying inconsistencies in policy, do workers tend to blame their managers or the politicians for the difficulties of their work in order to disguise the uncertainties they actually feel about how to carry their role? Could a similar explanation be used for the extensive amount of time that workers spend, much of it unplanned, with their colleagues? In other words do workers tend to blame others and avoid examining the quality of their own knowledge and skills? Such assertions may be unfair but there was little evidence from the workers' recordings of contacts between them for the purposes of developing their own abilities. Similarly, as Chapter 11 indicated, the workers did not identify pre-service training as a particularly significant influence on their practice. Given that this was shown in Chapter 4 to be largely non-specialist, that is in either the generic areas of community education and youth and community work or social work, this may not be altogether surprising.

The problem of a lack of specialist community work training has already been noted. There is a very strong argument for the development of training courses and agencies specifically oriented to the needs of the community worker, but in the current climate of reducing educational resources it is difficult to be optimistic about the prospects. It may be necessary therefore to concentrate on extending the community work orientation of existing courses as well as to consider innovative means of promoting community work training.

For workers who may wish to operate in social work settings, the importance of appreciating the nature of the host discipline suggests that the attention should be given to social work training courses. It is ironic that twelve years after the Central Council for Education and Training in Social Work produced a curriculum study of community work[1] which, if implemented, would fulfil most of the skill and knowledge needs of the workers examined in this research, that few social work courses pay more than lip service to community work. This probably reflects a continued ambivalence and equivocation on the part of CCETSW about the place of community work in social work training. The CCETSW study argued that the central skills of community work are:

> "the ability to analyse a community situation objectively, share that analysis with other relevant parties and hence develop appropriate action."

They identified the tasks of the community worker as: interpersonal, groupwork, inter-organisational, political, educational, fact finding and social study, communication, organisation, finance and budgetting, recording, and self organisation. This list is remarkably similar to other formulations[2] and reflected in major practice theory texts such as

Henderson and Thomas.[3] Areas which the work patterns and issues raised by this study suggest might be in particular need of more attention are: study, analysis, evaluation, communication, inter-organisational work, political and educational skills, management and organisation of self in a relatively isolated work role, planning skills, skills for collaborative work with other disciplines and general knowledge of local and central government policy processes. The current debates about the content of CQSW courses, if extended to three years, is an opportunity to tackle some of these problems.

Whilst it may be easy to list the kinds of knowledge and skills that community workers require, the question of how these are most effectively learned is much less easy to answer. It seems likely, however, that sustained periods of supervised practice in fieldwork should be regarded as crucial. In this respect traditional college based courses, particularly those of a non-specialist nature, may be less suitable than some of the alternative routes to training which are now being experimented with.

In a typical CQSW course of two years duration the student who specialises in community work is unlikely to have more than one out of three assessed placements in community work practice. Post-graduate community education courses are only for one year and unlikely to offer more substantial placement experience. Two year non-graduate courses in either discipline have the problem of teaching basic conceptual material usually not required in post-graduate courses. None of these are adequate. The alternative of employment based approaches, may therefore, appear more attractive. These include so-called apprenticeship or accreditation schemes and agency and college partnerships. In the

former model accreditation is based on evaluation of the workers' performance in their job. As yet such models have only been developed by specific employers or groups of employers and are validated only by themselves. They do not lead, therefore, to a universally accepted qualilfication. Problems arise in relation to the potential of specific work settings to offer opportunity for development and assessment of an appropriately broad range of knowledge and skills, and in relation to the monitoring of the quality of supervision and support the 'apprentice' receives. From the point of view of the worker in training there is the advantage that they are in employment but this promotes further problems associated with tensions between serving the objectives of the employer and meeting the particular learning needs of the student. This is often exacerbated by tensions between line managers and training supervisors. (They could even be the same person).

For a group like the Community Work Assistants studied here, who acknowledge a need for training, the apprenticeship model may be attractive. However, in that the supervisors and trainers have to be drawn from the ranks of qualified staff who exhibit such uncertainty about their own knowledge and skills, there are difficulties. One option may therefore be to work in partnership with local colleges which have specialist community work trainers. Here, however, there are complex question to be resolved in relation to who has authority to accredit and on what basis, in addition to the practical problems of limited resources and the questions as to whether these agencies are sufficiently well equipped to promote relevant and effective training programmes.

My own preference in the light of the evidence of the study would be for the establishment of a specialist, independent, regional community work training agency working in partnership with the local authority and other local training agencies. It would both act as a broker in developing training packages, drawing on the skills of established workers and courses, and promote direct teaching and practice supervision. Its functions would not be restricted to pre-service qualifying training but also encompass post-qualifying work, research and consultancy on evaluation of practice. Such an agency would be able to relate to community workers in a range of different local authority departments and voluntary agencies whilst sustaining a clearly specialised identity as a community work training agency. (A similar model is to be found in Holland.) Funding is clearly a problem but there is a strong case in the evidence of this study for more effective training and evaluation, which it would be in the interests of the local authority to sponsor at least in part. Validation of any qualification remains a problem.

The lack of emergence of a satisfactory pattern of training for commuity work in large part reflects the degree to which community workers have failed to establish an independent and distinct professional identity and the generally high level of ambivalence on the part of community workers about professionalism. Both factors are worthy of more general comment.

Professionalism and professional identity.

Whether the lack of emergence of a significant level of specialised community work training is a product or a cause of the failure of

community workers to establish an independent professional identity is a conundrum. However, the position of workers in Strathclyde Regional Council reflects a common pattern, as illustrated in the Francis[4] et al material, in which workers are employed in departments or agencies which carry much wider functions than community work. Here they find themselves in a minority status relative to the mainstream activities of the department, outnumbered, in the case of the workers studied here, by social work staff of a variety of kinds. Whilst their employing agency suggests that all its employees should take a community development approach to their work, this is a mixed blessing. On the one hand it legitimises community work values and styles of working, on the other it suggests that it may not be a specialist function. This produces ambivalence about the role and status of community workers which, it is suggested, has significance in relation to community work staff in so far as their professional identity is confused.

An important question to be considered is whether the objectives of community work are most effectively carried by specialist community workers or by the development of community work skills by the practitioners of a wide range of public service activities. It can be argued that the organisational nature of local authorities indicates that most community needs are seen as primarily the responsibility of particular departments. Thus problems with schooling are located with the education department, problems of housing with the housing department and so on. This may be organisationally convenient but it does not necessarily reflect consumer experience of need. Problems of housing overcrowding in a community for example, may create household stresses which affect health, educational performance of children,

marital relationships, might produce anti-social behaviour and are probably an indicator of poverty. The problem, therefore, potentially involves many departments - housing, education, social work, the police, health and so on. Each department may view the need from the particular aspect with which it is presented but is in fact only responding to a single dimension of a multi-faceted problem. The deficiences of this approach are clearly recognised by many local authorities and in Strathclyde it is a fundamental concern of its social strategy to seek not only to promote collaborative practice between its own departments but also those of the District Councils. It has developed in-service training packages specifically designed to foster this collaborative approach and has involved local community organisations as well as professional staff. All this raises questions as to where community work staff should be located and whether they have a specialist or generalist function.

If the basic purpose of employing community workers is seen, as in Strathclyde, as:[5] 'assisting communities to organise around locally defined needs and issues' but those transcend the responsibilities of any one department there is clearly a potential problem if community workers are employed in particular service departments and constrained by the limitations of the departmental remit. This argument has been used often in local authorities to place a community development function within Chief Executive's Departments which have a corporate overview of policies but no direct service delivery function. It has also been an argument for a separate Department of Community Work. Strathclyde has exhibitted considerable ambivalence in relation to the location of community work staff.

The ambivalence on the part of Strathclyde Regional Council as an employer of community workers can be illustrated in a number of ways. Most significantly, perhaps, when it undertook its policy review of community work in 1976 it examined community work particularly as a part of the functions of the Social Work Department, the Education Department, and, given the role of the Community Involvement Branch, the Police. Whilst it was able to identify common principles and objectives for community work practice in these different contexts, it did not go on to suggest that community work required independent departmental status. Operational control of the Police was in any case outwith their powers but an independent Department of Community Development within the local authority was considered but rejected. Three grounds were stated:[6] that there were 'in existence fairly strong departmental loyalties which would tend to militate against any smooth integration'; that there would be considerable additional costs: most significantly, that they saw the specialist community workers as the means of bringing about a more community oriented practice in the service departments. To quote:

> "Community work is essentially two pronged, the worker should be concerned not only with meeting the needs of the groups with which he is working in the community, but also with working within his own department so as to improve its internal knowledge of community problems and aspirations, in the hope of ultimately modifying its practices and policies in ways which are to the community's advantage."

As the evidence from the study has indicated actual development of practice appears to have shown this hope to be misplaced. In the Social Work Department at least, workers appear (Chapter 7) not to see influencing of their own department as a high priority, they do not generally regard their social work colleagues or managers as open to

such influence (Chapter 8), and they view the groups with whom they work as resenting time spent on this type of activity (Chapter 10). The workers experience the location in a more established host discipline with defined statutory functions as threatening to the development of their role. Community work itself becomes fragmented through the lack of clear organisational mechanisms within the agency by which workers can share their concerns, undertake collective evaluation of practice or communicate its lessons. (The evidence in fact shows a very low level of involvement in evaluation but it may be that the organisational position of the workers inhibits its development.)

Whilst the review group did not establish an independent department, it did establish a Community Development Services Committee to relate to community work matters in all departments. However, the study does not suggest that this compensated for the lack of professiosnal identity arising from the distribution of workers in broader host disciplines. The failure of the strategy of influence through dispersion of community work staff has to an extent been recognised by the Regional Council in its policy document: Social Strategy for the Eighties.[7] It states:

> "Our formal political commitment has never wavered but we have to recognise that many staff did not know that we had a policy, let alone what it meant for them. Many of those who did saw it as a charitable gesture, in terms of dropping a few crumbs once the rest had had their fill..... Such perceptions reflect the 'blaming the victims' views deeply entrenched in society as a whole - as well as judgements about the 'peripheral' nature of the Region's strategy in relation to the 'real' work of departments."

It goes on to say with reference to the use of urban aid money as a major source of funding for the strategy that:

> "This has encouraged the view that the deprivation strategy is something to be left to Social Work - and within that, to community workers. This is a grave misconception....."

Whilst the Council may regard the view that the deprivation strategy is a primary responsibility of community workrs, especially those in the Social Work Department, as a misconception, the fact that it has arisen at all might be seen as an argument against specialist community work staff as such. From this viewpoint the emphasis would be placed on all departmental staff developing community work skills and performing their roles with a concern for the promotion of local organisation around community problems. To genuinely reflect community concerns, this would necessarily involve, not only the promotion of organisations whose objectives were compatible with those of the departments of the local authorities, but also support to groups critical of the services provided. I question whether such a proposition is realistic. In particular it would require the development in all staff of an understanding of, and commitment to, the complex and time consuming process of developing and supporting community initiative. As has been noted in relation to social work, most managers and workers lack a substantial knowledge of or developed skills in community work let alone the motivation to undertake these tasks (even though they may be seen as desirable). If this is true of the department which the Regional Council has seen as being most associated with its social strategy, it is doubtful therefore whether this approach would work without substantial investment in retraining and education to challenge established professional styles and values. Even then, at least in the short and medium terms, I do not find the argument convincing. However, this does not resolve the problems which arise when the existence of specialist workers is used by other staff to absolve themselves from

engagement in the community development styles of working on which the social strategy is based. For the approach to be effective it does require a corporate commitment of local authority staff to these styles of working. How then is this to be achieved?

In part at least the answer has to be found in the influence that the specialist community workers are able to exert on their host departments. Here the evidence of the research is not altogether encouraging for they clearly perceive themselves as marginalised within the Social Work Department (see Chapter 8).

The question which must be considered is whether the marginality of the community workers inside social work is the explanation for their limited influence? Would an independent department have had more likelihood of success or do the deficiencies lie in the capacities of the community workers irrespective of their organisational position?

As Hambleton[8] has commented:

> ".....it is inevitable that new initiatives will be faced with formidable opposition from entrenched interests. Whilst some opposition may take the form of hostile resistance, a more subtle and probably widespread response is to absorb the threat - to defuse, dilute and redirect the energies originally directed towards change."

It is this subtle resistance which is most difficult to combat and it is precisely the fear of many community workers that the emergence of a commitment to a more community oriented form of social work practice is in fact an absorption and dilution of the objectives of both community work and the social strategy. Hence much of the fear about the restructuring of the Social Work Department in which community work staff have been much more closely integrated with the work of the area teams.

I have already suggested that this is a 'fait-accompli' and that community workers should make the best of the situation which is not without attrative opportunities. However, I would suggest that the strength of the influence of community work on other disciplines might be greater if they had a clear professional and organisational identity within the local authority. Currently they are operating on the 'coat tails' of other disciplies and have little formal opportunity to engatge with one another in pursuit of a clearer sense of their particular knowledge and skill base. This development work has largely been left to informal self-help activity by workers independent of their employers. There is little evidence from the discussion of what the workers do (Chapter 5) that much attention is being given to these issues.

There is a history in the region of community worker groups concerned with both their own professional development and performing pressure group functions but few have sustained themselves over long periods and none have attracted a wide level of community worker support. This local pattern is not dissimilar to the national pattern, as described in Chapter 1, in that workers have not only shown limited commitment to their own professional development but have been highly ambivalent about what sort of identity they should have. In national terms the breakaway of the Association of Community Workers from the British Association of Social Workers indicated a wish for separate identity but the opening of membership to anyone describing themselves as a community worker demonstrated a wish to avoid the exclusiveness typical of established professions. It suggested an uncertainty as to what the boundaries of the occupation are. On the one hand there appears

to be a desire on the part of community workers to speak with authority about the needs of disadvantaged people, whilst on the other their commitments to enabling people to speak for themselves present them with a disabling contradiction between their values and their desire to be effective. The emergence in the last year of the professional pressure group: Community Development U.K. is a sign that some workers are prepared to operate more in the traditions of professional experts, but such approaches continue to meet substantial resistance.

The Strathclyde workers are caught up in the same dilemmas. I would question, however, whether community workers can afford the luxury of a somewhat esoteric ethical debate. The values of community empowerment do not have to be seen as incompatible with the direct organised expression of community work opinion. Indeed, the key messages which community workers are in a position to present to other local authority staff concern the need to listen to consumers and how their interests can be promoted. After ten years of investment in community work Strathclyde Region might be regarded, given its aspiration that all staff should develop a community orientation, as entitled to a more sophisticated and systematic expression of the contribution which community work approaches can make than the research indicates they are getting. It may be argued that the Region has not opted for the organisational structure most likely to facilitate this but community workers cannot absolve themselves from responsibility on this basis. If they do, they condemn themselves to a continued marginality relative to the mainstream host disciplines to which they are attached. Community work will be able to speak with authority when it understands the potential of its intervention and can explain it to others. The concentration of

community workers in Strathclyde Region and the long term security they have had in their jobs places them in an exceptionally strong position to clarify the parameters of the activity. The lack of apparent attention to doing so is disturbing. If it is based on lack of analytical capacity rather than inertia the prospects for community work are bleak.

There is of course a lingering doubt in my mind as to whether community workers actually want to develop a higher and more independent profile. It could be that to explain the limited impact of community work by reference to its marginality in a more powerful host discipline is a means of avoiding the acknowledgement of deficiencies of knowledge, skill or commitment. In other words, in the case of these workers, the Social Work Department may be used as a shield to protect a fledgling occupation from its own insecurities. The evidence of the study does not allay my fears in this respect.

In ideal terms it may be reasonable to argue that community work should not be a specialist function but the difficulties of generating a general commitment to this approach argue, at least in the short term for the continuation of employment of specialist workers. However, they carry the burden of diffusing this approach into the mainstream practices of the local authority departments. On the evidence from the Social Work Department, they need to give more attention to this responsibility and require political and managerial support in carrying the role. In social work, despite all the dilemmas of the community work contribution which have been identified, the emergence of a restructuring of the department on community social work lines (see Chapter 14) is evidence that the values of community development have

become more central to the organisation of its services. This, in part, is a reflection of the promotion into senior management and policy planning positions of staff from community work backgrounds who are bringing that perspective to bear on the overall policy, though it is also a reflection of the persistence of political commitment to the social strategy and an embracing of this approach by other senior managers.

It is worth dwelling briefly on the emergence in mainstream social work management of former community workers for they illustrate the potential for the adoption of a community development orientation in carrying broader responsibilities in a service department. As such they may offer a model which should become common throughout a community oriented local authority. If this became the norm the need for specialist departmental community workers would be more questionable. However the achievement of such a situation demands a much wider range of changes than in the local authority alone. A variety of external influences affect the functioning of a local authority and its staff. For example, statutory obligations must be fulfilled and can require use of coercive authority which may be seen as incompatible with community interests. Values and practices promoted by professional associations may resist the basic values of consumer empowerment which open practitioners to more critical scrutiny. As we have seen in the earlier discussion of training in this chapter, the professional training courses for local authority workers may not value community development styles and produce workers resistant or indifferent to the approach. Ironically, as the previous chapter argues, the attachment to community based caring by proponents of minimalist welfare provision, currently in

political ascendency in central government, may lead many workers to resist community oriented approaches because in this model they are perceived as cost cutting rather than genuinely empowering.

Given countervailling pressures such as these it is important, in my view, for the foreseable future, to have a significant group of specialist workers who provide an 'in house' pressure group which promotes community work values and practices in other disciplines as well as carrying out direct work on its own account. However uncomfortable it may feel to be located in a host department with broader service responsibilities it may be less prone to marginalisation than if a separate department were created. It may make it more difficult to take a corporate view of community needs but other mechanisms such as Area Development Teams are being employed to require departments to develop their services in a more integrated fashion.

Despite the negative aspects of the evidence of community workers' feelings about the Social Work Department, I would argue, then, that they should be employed in this setting. Since this appears likely to be the case, before leaving discussion of professional identity it is worth commenting on the professional status of the host discipline to which the community workers studied here have become attached. In the light of its relatively short periods of training, its lack of a thoroughly established body of knowledge, its practice in highly bureaucratic structures and the limited degree of discretion in the offering of services by its practitioners, social work has been labelled by Etzioni[9] and others as a 'semi-profession'. This status restricts the authority with which its practitioners can speak. Given their aspirations to influence policy towards disadvantaged people, community

workers may legitimately ask themselves whether association with social work as currently practiced serves this objective. At present community work training is generally inadequate and the appropriate knowledge base ill defined and poorly understood. Whilst a higher degree of operational autonomy appears to exist than for social workers much of the frustration expressed by the workers interviewed for the study relates to working in a large and complex bureaucracy. Community work then is not in any better position than social work to claim an independent professional status.

Here there may be a common agenda for community workers and social workers between whom, as community social work models of practice and training emerge, there may in any case become increasingly blurred distinctions.

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# Chapter 18

## Propositions for the future development of community work

### Introduction

The purpose of this final chapter is to draw together the discussion in Part VI of the study and, as a summary of the material, present some propositions for the way in which community work should develop in the Region, particularly in its Social Work Department. The propositions for the future will be presented first in general terms. These will be followed by propositions in relation to the community work profession itself and, more specifically, for relationship between community workers and social workers, other disciplines, politicians and community organisations respectively. In addition consideration will be given to propositions for training.

Evidence and arguments for these propositions are to be found throughout the text.

### 1. General propositions

- Given the Regional Social Strategy, there is great opportunity for radical alliances of professional, political and community interests in promoting redistributive, anti-deprivation policies and practices. There appears to be greater potential for compatible action than community workers seem to acknowledge.

- Community work is a useful means of counteracting centralising tendencies in local and central government which make them more remote from the people they serve.

- Community work is a useful means of counteracting the confusion experienced by consumers in relating to functionally fragmented provision of local and central government services.

- It is a legitimate function of community work to work with politicians and local community organisations to challenge the subversion of open political decision making by professional administrators.

- The political authority of the Regional Council to set policies for community work needs to be fully acknowledged by its practitioners. However, politicians should not expect or get uncritical acceptance of policy.

- If the authority of the Council is to deserve acceptance which will involve more centrally determined community work objectives, the Council and its members have to demonstrate understanding of and adherence to their policy. Only on this basis can community workers develop a trusting relationship with their employers.

- Goals set for community work should be based on a realistic assessment of the potential of the method to achieve the desired changes. This applies both to policy makers and practitioners.

- Community work has a legitimate claim to be an independent professional discipline and requires organisational arrangements which provide scope for its effective practice. However, the application of community work techniques must not be seen as the exclusive province of community workers.

- In-service training in community work approaches to social problems is needed for all local authority workers if they are to be able to contribute to a community development based social strategy. It is most urgently needes for non-specialist managers of community workers.

- In communities characterised by substantial and long term unemployment, volunteer community activists should not be exploited as a cheap source of labour for community care projects.

- Community workers, the local authority and community organisations should guard against the undermining of public welfare services by public expenditure cutting which leads to substitution of public services by the voluntary community activities promoted through community work.

- Given their relative youth and inexperience, community workers should be given more time to demonstrate their potential. They should not be made the spearhead of complex social changes for which their methods are inappropriate and should not be made the scapegoat for any failings of social policy on this basis.

- Community work should be seen as just one in a range of methods of promoting social change which counteract the problems of people in disadvantaged communities.

2. Propositions for the Community Work Profession

- Community workers cannot justify their interventions on the basis of their personal dispositions towards particular interests that have attracted their attention.

- Community workers' interventions should be justified within the objectives and policies of the Regional Council Social Strategy. They should accept more direction from the priorities of the strategy.

- In the light of the first two propositions it is appropriate that the Regional Council should employ workers broadly associated with reformist approaches to practice.

- Community workers should become less parochial in their approaches to practice and engage in more inter-organisational and inter-neighbourhood work.

- Community workers need to give much more attention to community based social planning work.

- Community workers must show more inclination to place the local conditions with which they work in the context of broader patterns of need and service provision within the region.

- Community workers need to give much greater attention to systematic investigation of social conditions in the communities in which they work.

- Community workers need to give much greater attention to analysis reflection and evaluation of their work and apply this to the planning of their interventions.

- Community workers need to give much greater attention to explaining the roles and purposes of their activities to both workers in other professions and politicians.

- Community workers should demonstrate more commitment to the development of their own expertise, not as an exclusive commodity but as a means of serving the interests of disadvantaged people.

- Community workers need to resolve their ambivalent feelings about their professional identity in order to present themselves in an effective way to outside audiences.

- Community workers should recognise that the values of community empowerment are not incompatible with the organised expression of community work opinion and develop a professional organisation which speaks with authority for community work and its consumers.

- Community workers should not disguise the shortcomings of their performance which are their responsibility by displacing the blame onto others, most particularly their managers, politicians or the community organisations with which they work.

3. Propositions for the relationship of community workers to the Social Work Department.

- The insecurity within, and negative feelings of workers towards, the Social Work Department must be addressed. Community workers, their managers and social work colleagues should explore the reasons for the tensions between them and develop more compatible working relationships.

- From the evidence of this research, the explanations for tensions between community work and social work may be more fruitfully sought in mutually misdirected and uninformed labelling than in fundamental antagonism to the kind of community work which is actually taking place.

- Community workers should recognise and work with the emergence of community social work models of practice as an opportunity to influence the overall character of social work activities. However, they should resist activities which burden rather than empower communities and their members.

- Though they may have some reasonable reservations about the recent restructuring of the Social Work Department, community workers should work with it and attempt to use the opportunities it creates.

- The accountability of community work staff to Area Managers in the new structure should not be allowed to inhibit the strategic issue work between neighbourhoods and districts across the region.

- The extensive promotion of community care projects through community work requires much more careful integrative planning with parallel services provided through paid staff of the Social Work Department.

- Where community work and other social work staff are working towards common objectives there is scope for collaborative practice and evaluation.

- Community work and social work have common cause to improve their knowledge and skills for collaborative practice.

- For community workers and social workers to work compatibly they should seek common principles of operation. These should include: understanding need from the consumer perspective; recognising and responding to both private troubles and public issues and seeing them as interconnected; seeking to liberate not domesticate community resources and energies; promoting as far as is possible, a preventive approach to social problems.

- Community workers should regard their own employing department as a much more significant focus for their change efforts. The Regional policy of distributing community workers between service departments should be used, as it was intended, as a means of influencing mainstream practice.

- In order that the Social Work Department is better understood as a context for practice, it is desirable to have a higher proportion of community workers trained through social work courses. Alternatively greater attention should be given to compensatory in-service induction and training for community work staff trained in other disciplines.

- In order that social workers are better able to appreciate and work with community workers, all social work qualifying training courses should give substantial attention to teaching and practice of

community work as a social work method and as a method in its own right.

- Community workers are entitled to expect all of their colleagues and managers to operate in ways compatible with the objectives of the Regional Council Social Strategy.

4. Propositions for the relationship between community workers and other disciplines.

- Community workers should reduce their isolation from other local authority staff and give more attention to promoting relationships which foster the engagement of other disciplines in community development.

- Community workers should develop a more sophisticated appreciation of the work of other professions and departments and of the local authority as a whole.

- Community Workers should give full recognition to the validity of non-community work methods which achieve the same ends as they seek.

- Community workers should recognise and work more extensively in alliances with other professions who have expertise to offer in tackling community problems.

- If community workers are to give more attention to social planning approaches, improved relations with, and understanding of, other disciplines are imperative.

- Though it may be appropriate that community work staff are employed in service departments rather than in a separate department, there is nonetheless a need to further develop organisational arrangements which enable work to take place across departmental boundaries.

- Since the Regional Social Strategy is corporate, community workers are entitled to expect other disciplines within the local authority to practice in ways which are compatible with the objectives of the strategy.

5. Propositions for relationships between community workers and politicians

- Community workers need to develop more sophisticated understanding of the complexity of the roles of elected members and their relationships with local government officers.

- The low level of direct communication between community workers and politicians needs to be reviewed in order to improve their understanding of the processes and objectives of community work.

- Community workers should give attention to sustaining their relationships with elected members which engage them in the debate of local problems before they are presented for decisions. This is particularly important in relation to proposals of a controversial nature or presented by unpopular minority interests.

- Contacts between community workers, community organisation and politicians should avoid the exerting of pressure by local sectional interests to the detriment of just redistributive social policy. (This will be difficult if community workers focus primarily on the needs of the local patch without regard to wider patterns of disadvantage.)

- Good relations between community workers and politicians will only be sustained if they both carry their roles in ways which reflect the strategic redistributive policies of the Council.

- The roles of community workers, as brokers and intermediaries in promoting community influence on, and participation in, local

affairs should be acknowledged as legitimately involving them in political processes. Such roles overlap with those of elected members and should be recognised as an inevitable consequence of employing community workers. They should not, however, use this position to subvert, but to promote, effective local representative politics.

## 6. Propositions for the relationship between community workers and community organisations and activists

- Community groups appear to be primarily motivated by self interest and local concerns. Community workers have succumbed too much to these interests and should not regard local organisations as having sovereign authority over their activities.

- Community workers need to negotiate local interests in the context of wider social policy objectives of the Regional Council. Their activities should serve, not distort, these wider objectives.

- Community workers should become more engaged in collaborative action between community groups directed towards strategic policy objectives of the social strategy.

- Federal campaigns by community organisations should be linked to parallel action by the local authority itself or other pressure groups including trade unions and voluntary organisations.

- Though wider strategic social policy concerns should have more influence in community work activity, there are very significant ameliorations of a variety of social problems which can be achieved through the development of the latent skills and talents of local people in community care activity in their own communities.

- Whilst greater emphasis should be given to social planning and inter-neighbourhood work, community workers should retain a basic

concern with promoting an effective infrastructure of effective service and campaigning organisations in the disadvantaged communities of the region.

- Community workers should give more attention to assisting community organisations to test the potential of community participation opportunities offered by the Regional Social Strategy.

- In the light of the blurred distinctions of work between many community activists and paid community workers, parallel and joint training and development programmes should be given more attention.

- The availability of voluntary labour as a result of substantial long-term unemployment should not be exploited, however inadvertently, as a cheap alternative to properly funded services.

7. Proposition in relation to training

- The quality and focus of training for community work requires urgent review.

- General areas of learning which appear to require increased attention in training for community work are: study, analysis, evaluation, communication, inter-organisational work, political and educational skills, management and organisation of self in an isolated work role, planning skills, skills for collaborative work with other disciplines, knowledge of central and local government policy processes.

- The specific need for community workers to develop community based social planning roles requires increased skills in data collection and analysis of local communities and their social, political and economic characteristics and needs. It also requires

ability to understand and interpret evidence from other agencies and skills for collaborative practice between agencies.

- Given current constraints on public expenditure in higher education, it may be more productive to focus attention on improving the community work dimensions of non-specialist training courses than attempting to promote specialist courses. Both community work and social work would benefit from more community focussed teaching in qualifying courses.

- Further development and experimentation with apprenticeship schemes and agency/college partnerships should be undertaken.

- More specifically, partnership arrangements between a number of employers and colleges for resourcing a regional community work training, research and consultancy agency should be explored.

- Increased attention is required to in-service training for all local authority workers who are expected to contribute to the Region's community development based social strategy.

- More attention should be given to training opportunities for voluntary community activists.

Postscript

These propositions all arise from the discussion of the evidence of the research. Since the majority of them refer to the need for change not just in community workers and the way that they practice, but also in the approach of politicians, managers, social work colleagues, other disciplines, trainers and, to some extent, community organisations; the impression may be left of a very negative view of community work. Certainly, there is substantial room for change to improve performance

but this is not to dismiss the value of much of what has already been done or to underestimate the difficulty involved. Community work has been, and should continue to be a significant component of the Regional Social Strategy. As the Council has stated in relation to the strategy as a whole:

> "Strathclyde Region is not in the business of crash programmes and hopeful rhetoric - but rather of a long term process of transforming the way people think about themselves and of what they are capable of and of reshaping our methods of implementation accordingly.....
>
> .....Confidence has developed. Citizens are more confident about the activities which have most relevance to the people in these areas....."

This may be a self administered testimonial but to an observer of the policy and its practice it has a ring of truth. This research has not been, and was not intended to be, an evaluation of the Regional Social Stratgy, nonetheless it has been the constant backdrop to the examination of community work practice in the Social Work Department. It is evident that community work has had an important role to play There is much room for concern, as has been suggested, as to whether its contribution has been and is being as effective and relevant as it might be. Similarly the frustrations expressed by workers may well often have good foundation. Nonetheless, the long term and substantial commitment to community work as part of an anti-deprivation strategy is probably unique. It has provided the basis for engagement by community workers in social action which can build partnership between community and local authority on the basis of shared ideals, in a planned programme in which commitment to positive discrimination genuinely redistributes the burden of uncertainty and risk more widely. In so doing it fulfils conditions for effective social action suggested by Marris.[2] He says:

> "These three conclusions from the history of the Community Development Project and the Docklands plan are, I think, relevant to any social action on behalf of the disadvantaged: that it needs a context of broadly shared ideals to which it can appeal, and in whose terms it can challenge the legitimacy of things as they are: that these ideals of justice, essentially involve the way that the burden of uncertainty is distributed; and that planning is a necessary part of any process of allocating this burden fairly."

It is easy to snipe at any policy, especially one which attempts to tackle such a massive and all embracing problem as multiple deprivation. There are no doubt many flaws and counterveilling pressures which undermine the intent of policy but the opportunity to work in an authority which, from its inception, set its 'prime objective' as the tackling of multiple deprivation and followed it through with substantial funding is rare indeed. Community work has grown with the strategy. There is much to be learned from the experience. It is hoped that this study makes some useful contribution not only to assessment of the role of community work but also to the broader strategies adopted to combat disadvantage.

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1. Strathclyde Regional Council 'Social Strategy for the Eighties', 1984.

2. Marris, P., 'Meaning and Action - community planning and conceptions of change', Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1987.

APPENDIX 1

## Research Project on Community Development Practice in Strathclyde Regional Social Work Department

### Background Information

(1) Name.....Sex: M/F

(2) Date of Birth.....

(3) Work address, i.e. the main base from which you work

.....

.....

.....

(4) Is the address given in (3) above (tick appropriate box)

(a) A social work area team office / /

(b) A district community development team office / /

(c) A community flat / /

(d) Other / /

(5) Is this base shared with any other agency Yes/No

If so, with whom?.....

(6) If you normally work from more than one base please indicate the other bases:

(1) .....

(2) .....

(3) .....

(7) In your day-to-day work to whom are you formally immediately accountable? (Tick appropriate box).

C.D.O. / / Senior Community Worker / / Area Officer / /

Other / / Please specify.....

Don't know / /

(8) Within the agency base from which you work, (as identified in Question 3), how many other community development staff are there:

C.D.O.s .....

Community Workers .....

Community Work Assistants .....

Other Community Development staff, e.g.
Pre-school community organisers .....

(9) How long have you been in your present post?

.....years .....months

(10) Please list, with dates, previous community work posts you have held.

| Post | Dates From | To |
|---|---|---|
| (1)..... | ...../..... | |
| (2)..... | ...../..... | |
| (3)..... | ...../..... | |
| (4)..... | ...../..... | |

(11) If you were in another occupation or occupations prior to becoming a community worker, please indicate the nature of the occupation(s) and period of time within it/them.

| Occupation | Dates From | To |
|---|---|---|
| (1)..... | ...../..... | |
| (2)..... | ...../..... | |
| (3)..... | ...../..... | |

(12) Please indicate any academic qualifications which you hold.

(1) O Levels Number / /

(2) Highers Number / /

(3) A Levels Number / /

(4) Degree / / Specify subject.....

(5) Higher Degree / / Specify subject.....

(6) Other high education qualification excluding professional qualification / / Specify subject.....

(13) Please indicate whether you hold any of the professional qualifications listed below and where this/these were obtained.

| | | Where obtained | Length of Course | Date Completed |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| (1) C.Q.S.W. | / / | | | |
| (2) Certificate in Youth and Community Work | / / | | | |
| (3) Certificate in Community Education | / / | | | |
| (4) Community Development Diploma | / / | | | |
| (5) Adult Education Diploma | / / | | | |

(14) Do you hold any other professional qualification - specify.

| Qualification | Where obtained | Length of Course | Date Completed |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | |

(15) Prior to entering either community work training or community work employment, were you involved in any relevant voluntary activities?

Yes / No

| Nature of activity | Period involved From - To | Approximate hours per week |
|---|---|---|

APPENDIX 2.

Research Project on Community Development Practice in Strathclyde Regional Council Social Work Department

Time Budget Diary Recording

The purpose of this time budget diary recording is to provide a detailed breakdown of the day to day activities of community workers. Little is known for certain about the precise demands of the job or the purposes for which particular activity is undertaken. Recording in detail is an onerous task but it will be of substantial importance in attempting to discover the character of the job and hence identify appropriate knowledge and skills for practice.

In order to ensure that your recording is as accurate as possible, please record each day the activity of that day. Ideally, try to record discrete activities as they occur. Trying to remember activity over larger periods is extremely difficult and liable to be distorted by selective perception and inadequate memory. Be brief but attempt to follow the content guidelines set out below. Consult the example sheet provided.

Content of recording

Recording sheets will include the following typical activities. Please record as indicated:

(1) Attending formal meetings i.e. meetings with a pre-planned agenda. These may be meetings of your own agency, other agencies, community groups and so on. Please record:

(a) Length of meeting.
(b) Number and status of people attending, e.g. one district councillor, two community workers, four representatives of the community council.
(c) The main matters discussed.
(d) Your formal and informal roles in the meeting, e.g. state if you act as chairperson or take minutes, supply specific information, offer support to group decision making, act purely as observer etc.

(2) Attending informal meetings/discussions i.e. meetings or discussions with one or more other persons arising without pre-planning or formal agenda. Please record.

(a) Length of meeting/discusion.
(b) Number and status of persons involved.
(c) The main matters discussed.
(d) By whom instigated (if appropriate).

(3) Supervision meetings i.e. formal meetings for purposes of supervision of your own or other persons work. Please record:

(a) Length of meeting.
(b) Number and status of persons involved.
(c) The main matters discussed.
(d) By whom instigated.

(4) Correspondence i.e. internal and external memoranda and letters. Please record:

(a) From whom and to whom correspondence is sent.
(b) The main content.

(5) Telelephone calls. Please record:

(a) From whom and to whom calls are made.
(b) Main content of conversation.
(c) Length of calls.

(6) Preparation of written material e.g. report writing, questionnaire preparation, minute preparation, agendas, articles of community newspapers, personal recording etc. Please record:

(a) The nature of the written work.
(b) The purpose for which it is written.
(c) For whom it is being prepared.
(d) Length.

(7) Preparation and planning activity e.g. information gathering, reading reports, examining records such as council minutes etc. Please record:

(a) The nature of the activity.
(b) The purpose for which it is undertaken.
(c) The time involved.

(8) Administration e.g. filing, photocopying, preparing expenses claims etc. Please record:

(a) The nature of the activity.
(b) The time involved.

(9) Any other significant activities. If there is any activity not encompassed by the above please record.

(a) The nature of the activity.
(b) The purpose of the activity.
(c) The time involved.

To indicate the sort of recording we hope to obtain a hypothetical record of a community worker's day is provided for illustration. Please use this as a guide to your own record keeping.

APPENDIX 3

Research on Community Work Practice in Strathclyde
Regional Social Work Department

Final Interview Questionnaire

Note to interviewer:

(a) Begin by handing Sheet A - Description of Research Programme to respondent to read. Offer any clarifications required.

(b) Before asking the first question read the following explanation of procedure and clarify if necessary.

'For the first four questions I will use the following procedure: I will ask the question to which you are invited to give an open ended response. I will take notes on your response which will be read back to you when you have finished answering to check the accuracy of my record. Then, if you have given more than one response to the question I will ask you to identify the individual responses and place them in order of importance.'

N.B. Use separate sheets to record each question as laid out.

Question 1: What do you hope your community work will achieve? (Interviewer: follow procedure described).

General notes:

Responses placed in priority order

(1)

(2)

(3)

(4)

(5)

(6)

Question 2: What do you think Strathclyde Regional Council (i.e. the elected members collectively) hope will be achieved by the employment of community workers? (Interviewer: follow procedure described).

General notes:

Responses placed in priority order

(1)

(2)

(3)

(4)

(5)

(6)

Question 3: What do you think Strathclyde Regional Council Social Work Department (i.e. the senior management) hope your community work will achieve? (Interviewer: follow procedure described).

General notes:

Responses placed in priority order

(1)

(2)

(3)

(4)

(5)

(6)

Question 4: What do you think the members of the community groups with whom you work hope your community work will achieve? (Interviewer: follow procedure described).

General notes:

Responses placed in priority order

(1)

(2)

(3)

(4)

(5)

(6)

Note to Interviewer

Before moving to question 5, read the following explanation of procedure and clarify if necessary.

'For the next four questions I would like you to reflect on the answers to each of the first four questions in the light of your recorded work during the designated month. My concern is to discover what aspects of your owrk during the month would be valued most and least highly as you see it by yourself, Strathclyde Regional Council, Strathclyde Regional Social Work Department and the community groups with which you work.

For these questions I will use the following procedure. I will remind you of your answer to the previous question to which these questions relate and then ask you the appropriate questions. I will take notes on your response which will be read back to you when you have finished answering to check the accuracy of my record. I will then ask you to list the aspects of your work identified and place them in order of importance'.

Question 5: This questions related to Question 1 (Interviewer - remind respondent of the question and his answer to it).

(a) What aspects of your work during the recorded month do you value most highly in relation to the objectives identified in Question 1.

General notes:

List in order of priority

(1)

(2)

(3)

(4)

(5)

(6)

Question 5:

(b) What aspects of your work during the recorded month do you identify as having least value in relation to the objectives identified in Qestion 1?

General notes:

List in order of priority

(1)

(2)

(3)

(4)

(5)

(6)

Question 6: This question relates to Question 2. (Interviewer: remind respondent of the question and his answer to it).

(a) What aspects of your work during the recorded month do you think Strathclyde Regional Council would value most highly in relation to the objectives identified in Question 2.?

General notes:

List in order of priority

(1)

(2)

(3)

(4)

(5)

(6)

Question 6:

(b) What aspects of your work during the recorded month do you think Strathclyde Regional Council would regard as of least value in relation to the objectives identified in Question 2?

General notes:

List in order of priority

(1)

(2)

(3)

(4)

(5)

(6)

Question 7: This question relates to Question 3. (Interviewer: remind respondent of the question and his answer to it.)

(a) What aspects of your work during the recorded month do you think Strathclyde Regional Council Social Work Department would value most highly in relation to the objectives identified in Question 3?

General notes:

List in order of priority

(1)

(2)

(3)

(4)

(5)

(6)

Question 7:

(b) What aspects of your work during the recorded month do you think Strathclyde Regional Council Social Work Department would regard as of least value in relation to the objectives identified in Question 3?

General notes:

List in order of priority

(1)

(2)

(3)

(4)

(5)

(6)

Question 8: This question relates to Question 4. (Interviewer: remind respondent of the question and his answer to it.)

(a) What aspects of your work during the recorded month do you think members of community groups with whom your work would value most highly in relation to the objectives identified in Question 4?

General notes:

List in order of priority:

(1)

(2)

(3)

(4)

(5)

(6)

Question 8:

(b) What aspects of your work during the recorded month do you think members of community groups with whom you work would regard as of least value in relation to the objectives identified in Question 4?

General notes:

List in order of priority:

(1)

(2)

(3)

(4)

(5)

(6)

Question 9:

(a) There are many factors which affect the character and style of community work. Please examine this list and place these factors in order of influence in relation to your own work. (Interviewer: hand Sheet B to respondent and allow time to read and digest the list. Record the letter prefix for each factor in priority order.)

List in priority order

1 ..... 2 ..... 3 ..... 4 ..... 5 .....

6 ..... 7 ..... 8 ..... 9 ..... 10 .....

11 ..... 12 ..... 13 ..... 14 .....

(b) Are there any other factors which you think may be of significance. If so, what are they and where would you place them in order of influence relative to those listed?

Factors Position in order

Question 10: Please examine the list of labels on this card. (Interviewer: hold up the card and only allow sufficient time to read the card C, then continue immediately with the question.) Which of these labels would you say most closely describes the character of your work?

Answer .....

(Interviewer: only if the respondent declines to identify a label, continue as follows): What other label would you choose?

Answer .....

Question 11: (Interviewer: before asking this question tell the respondent you will follow the same procedure as you need in Questions 1 - 4 and remind him of the procedure.)

What do you consider to be the most significant characteristics of work described by the label you chose in answer to Question 10?

General notes:

Characteristics in order of significance

(1)

(2)

(3)

(4)

(5)

(6)

Note to interviewer

Please thank participants for their cooperation in the research.

APPENDIX 4

Time - Budget/Diary Record - Example Sheet

Date: Tuesday, December 1st 1981.

| Time | Activity |
|---|---|
| 9.15 - 11.15 a.m. | Community Development team meeting: Present: C.D.O., 3 Community Workers, 1 Community Work Assistant, 1 Pre-School Community Organiser. Main items: (1) appointment of senior community worker. (2) Departmental ban on overtime. (3) Federation of play-scheme organisations. (4) Procedure for urban aid submissions. (5) Management of secretarial work loads. Role performed: Minute taker and participant group member. |
| 11.30 - 12.00 noon | Correspondence: Letters from: (1) District Council Leisure and Recreation Department re use of sports hall for play-schemes. (2) Community Worker in Aberdeen: request for information on dampness campaign. (3) Circular from community training group re employment conference. |
| 12.00 noon | Telephone call from Mrs. X, secretary, Townsend, T.A. personal problem. |
| 12.15 p.m. | Administration: filing |
| 12.30 p.m. | Lunch |
| 1.45 - 3.15 p.m. | Visit Mrs. X for discussion. Content: (1) personal problem. (2) Agenda for next T.A. committee meeting. |
| 3.15 - 3.35 p.m. | Telephone call to Community Education Worker Y re proposals for joint urban aid submission for unemployed centre in Townsend. |
| 3.35 - 4.00 p.m. | Correspondence: prepare memorandum of C.D. team re: difficulties over joint urban aid submission for unemployed centre. |

| Time | Activity |
|---|---|
| 4.00 - 4.30 p.m. | Visit Mr. Z, Chairman Townsend Community Council to check when they will discuss proposed unemployed centre. Sus out feelings. |
| 7.00 - 8.30 p.m. | Attend meeting of Out Town Tenants Association<br>Present: 6 of 8 committee members. Main discussion:<br>(1) plans for survey of tenants views on proposed improvement scheme.<br>(2) Persistent non-attendance of some committee members.<br>Role performed: hard information on surveys, support to group handling non-attenders issue. |
| 8.30 - 9.00 p.m. | Discussion with chairman Out Town T.A. re commitment of other committee members. |

APPENDIX 5

Dear

Research Project on the practice of Community Work
in Strathclyde Regional Social Work Department

You should already have received a memorandum from Philip Bryers notifying you of the research project on community work practice and informing you that you have been selected within the sample. I hope the following comments will clarify the purpose and character of the research.

Some time ago the Regional Comunity Development Section asked if I would be prepared to undertake some research on community work in the Regional Social Work Department. I expressed interest providing that the work was independent of the Region and that some resources were offered to support the research work. I therefore drew up a proposal suggesting that there would be great value in acquiring knowledge about the precise components of the job of community worker. Ironically, though the literature contains many neat theoretical models of community work practice, little is actually known for certain about how community workers allocate their time between different activities. To have a clearer view of the components and practical demands of the job would facilitate better understanding of support and training needs for community workers as well as demystifying outside observers about the nature of the work.

To support the process of acquiring the necessary information I suggested the secondment on a part-time basis of three community workers employed by the Region. After some delays the Regional Management team of the Social Work Department has approved the research proposed plus worker secondment.

The study will examine the work of a randomly selected 50% sample of community workers, senior community workers and community development officers employed in the social work department. For those in the sample there will be three elements to the study:

(1) a brief questionnaire on employment experience, qualifications and work context.

(2) a diary recording programme following a pre-defined framework over a period of four weeks.

(3) a follow-up interview to explore the content of the diary recording.

Contd/....

All the elements of the research will be totally confidential, i.e. no material of an individual nature will be revealed to any other party than myself and workers directly undertaking the research project.

Each person in the sample will be supported in the process by one of the seconded research workers. They, or myself, will visit you to discuss and explain the research prior to commencement of data recording, will be available to support and advise on difficulties which may arise in the process and will undertake the follow up interviews. The seconded workers will not work with immediate colleagues or workers with whom they have had previous close contact.

The sample has been divided into three groups who will each be requested to record their work in a different four week period. You are in group.....of the sample and the proposed recording period is .....to..... will contact you before this date to arrange a meeting to discuss the research.

From my own experience as a community worker I appreciate that research of this nature is demanding on your time and that recording of your activities will be an onerous task. Nonetheless, again from experience, I would venture to suggest that the advantages outweigh the inconvenience. The process of recording your own activity stimulates assessment and analysis of your own work which is aided by the opportunity to discuss it in some depth with an independent outsider. Even if you are not entirely convinced about the personal benefits to yourself, I suspect most community workers would recognise the benefits of a more comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the nature of community work activity. This can only come about if we are able to obtain full and clearly recorded information. I would be very grateful therefore for your cooperation in this project.

I will write to you again shortly before the recording period specified. Thanking you in anticipation of your assistance.

Yours sincerely,

Alan Barr
LECTURER

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